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WORLD'S
GREAT ROMANCES

World's Great Romances

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Cupid and Psyche

In a certain city lived a king and queen who had three daughters exceeding fair. But the beauty of the elder sisters, though pleasant to behold, yet passed not the measure of human praise, while such was the loveliness of the youngest that men's speech was too poor to commend it worthily and could express it not at all. Many of the citizens and of strangers, whom the fame of this excellent vision had gathered thither, confounded by that matchless beauty, could but kiss the finger-tips of their right hands at sight of her, as in adoration to the goddess Venus herself. And soon a rumour passed through the country that she whom the blue deep had borne, forbearing her divine dignity, was even then moving among men, or that by some fresh germination from the stars, not the sea now, but the earth, had put forth a new Venus, endued with the flower of virginity.

This belief, with the fame of the maiden's loveliness, went daily further into distant lands, so that many people were drawn together to behold that glorious model of the age. Men sailed no longer to Paphos, to Cnidus or Cythera, to the presence of the goddess Venus: her sacred rites were neglected, her images stood uncrowned, the cold ashes were left to disfigure her forsaken altars. It was to a maiden that men's prayers were offered, to a human countenance they looked, in propitiating so great a godhead: when the girl went forth in the morning they strewed flowers on her way, and the victims proper to that unseen goddess were presented as she passed along. This conveyance of divine worship to a mortal kindled meantime the anger of the true Venus. "Lo! now, the ancient parent of nature," she cried, "the fountain of all elements! Behold me, Venus, benign mother of the world, sharing my honours with a mortal maiden, while my name, built up in heaven, is profaned by the mean things of earth! Shall a perishable woman bear my image about with her? In vain did the shepherd of Ida prefer me! Yet shall she have little joy, whosoever she be, of her usurped and unlawful loveliness!" Thereupon she called to her that winged, bold boy, of evil ways, who wanders armed by night through men's houses, spoiling their marriages; and stirring yet more by her speech his inborn wantonness, she led him to the city, and showed him Psyche as she walked.

"I pray thee," she said, "give thy mother a full revenge. Let this maid become the slave of an unworthy love." Then, embracing him closely, she departed to the shore and took her throne upon the crest of the wave. And lo! at her unuttered will, her ocean-servants are in waiting: the daughters of Nereus are there singing their song, and Portunus, and Salacia, and the tiny charioteer of the dolphin, with a host of Tritons leaping through the billows. And one blows softly through his sounding seashell, another spreads a silken web against the sun, a third presents the mirror to the eyes of his mistress, while the other

swim side by side below, drawing her chariot. Such was the escort of Venus as she went upon the sea.

Psyche meantime, aware of her loveliness, had no fruit thereof. All people regarded and admired, but none sought her in marriage. It was but as on the finished work of the craftsman that they gazed upon that divine likeness. Her sisters, less fair than she, were happily wedded. She, even as a widow, sitting at home, wept over her desolation, hating in her heart the beauty in which all men were pleased.

And the king, supposing the gods were angry, inquired of the oracle of Apollo, and Apollo answered him thus: "Let the damsel be placed on the top of a certain mountain, adorned as for the bed of marriage and of death. Look not for a son-in-law of mortal birth; but for that evil serpent-thing, by reason of whom even the gods tremble and the shadows of Styx are afraid."

So the king returned home and made known the oracle to his wife. For many days she lamented, but at last the fulfilment of the divine precept is urgent upon her, and the company make ready to conduct the maiden to her deadly bridal. And now the nuptial torch gathers dark smoke and ashes: the pleasant sound of the pipe is changed into a cry: the marriage hymn concludes in a sorrowful wailing: below her yellow wedding-veil the bride shook away her tears; insomuch that the whole city was afflicted together at the ill-luck of the stricken house.

But the mandate of the god impelled the hapless Psyche to her fate, and, these solemnities being ended, the funeral of the living soul goes forth, all the people following. Psyche, bitterly weeping, assists not at her marriage but at her own obsequies, and while the parents hesitate to accomplish a thing so unholy the daughter cries to them: "Wherefore torment your luckless age by long weeping? This was the prize of my extraordinary beauty! When all people celebrated us with divine honours, and in one voice named the New Venus, it was then ye should have wept for me as one dead. Now at last I understand that that one name of Venus has been my ruin. Lead me and set me upon the appointed place. I am in haste to submit to that well-omened marriage, to behold that goodly spouse. Why delay the coming of him who was born for the destruction of the whole world?"

She was silent, and with firm step went on the way. And they proceeded to the appointed place on a steep mountain, and left there the maiden alone, and took their way homewards dejectedly. The wretched parents, in their close-shut house, yielded themselves to perpetual night; while to Psyche, fearful and trembling and weeping sore upon the mountain-top, comes the gentle Zephyrus. He lifts her mildly, and, with vesture afloat on either side, bears her by his own soft breathing over the windings of the hills, and sets her lightly among the flowers in the bosom of a valley below.

Psyche, in those delicate grassy places, lying sweetly on her dewy bed, rested from the agitation of her soul and arose in peace. And lo! a grove of mighty trees, with a fount of water, clear as glass, in the midst; and hard by the water, a dwelling-place, built not by human hands but by some divine cunning. One recognized, even at the

entering, the delightful hostelry of a god. Golden pillars sustained the roof, arched most curiously in cedar-wood and ivory. The walls were hidden under wrought silver:—all tame and woodland creatures leaping forward to the visitor's gaze. Wonderful indeed was the craftsman, divine or half-divine, who by the subtlety of his art had breathed so wild a soul into the silver! The very pavement was distinct with pictures in goodly stones. In the glow of its precious metal the house is its own daylight, having no need of the sun. Well might it seem a place fashioned for the conversation of gods with men!

Psyche, drawn forward by the delight of it, came near, and, her courage growing, stood within the doorway. One by one, she admired the beautiful things she saw; and, most wonderful of all! no lock, no chain, nor living guardian protected that great treasure house. But as she gazed there came a voice—a voice, as it were unclothed of bodily vesture—"Mistress!" it said, "all these things are thine. Lie down, and relieve thy weariness, and rise again for the bath when thou wilt. We thy servants, whose voice thou hearest, will be beforehand with our service, and a royal feast shall be ready."

And Psyche understood that some divine care was providing, and, refreshed with sleep and the bath, sat down to the feast. Still she saw no one: only she heard words falling here and there, and had voices alone to serve her. And the feast being ended, one entered the chamber and sang to her unseen, while another struck the chords of a harp, invisible with him who played on it. Afterwards the sound of a company singing together came to her, but still so that none was present to sight; yet it appeared that a great multitude of singers was there.

And the hour of evening inviting her, she climbed into the bed; and as the night was far advanced, behold, a sound of a certain clemency approaches her. Then, fearing for her maidenhood in so great solitude, she trembled, and more than any evil she knew dreaded that she knew not. And now the husband, that unknown husband, drew near, and ascended the couch, and made her his wife; and lo! before the rise of dawn he had departed hastily. And the attendant voices ministered to the needs of the newly married. And so it happened with her for a long season. And as nature has willed, this new thing, by continual use, became a delight to her; the sound of the voice grew to be her solace in that condition of loneliness and uncertainty.

One night the bridegroom spoke thus to his beloved, "O Psyche, most pleasant bride! Fortune is grown stern with us, and threatens thee with mortal peril. Thy sisters, troubled at the report of thy death and seeking some trace of thee, will come to the mountain's top. But if by chance their cries reach thee, answer not, neither look forth at all, lest thou bring sorrow upon me and destruction upon thyself." Then Psyche promised that she would do according to his will. But the bridegroom was fled away again with the night. And all that day she spent in tears, repeating that she was now dead indeed, shut up in that golden prison, powerless to console her sisters sorrowing after her, or to see their faces; and so went to rest weeping.

And after a while came the bride-

groom again, and lay down beside her, and embracing her as she wept, complained, "Was this thy promise, my Psyche? What have I to hope from thee? Even in the arms of thy husband thou ceasest not from pain. Do now as thou wilt. Indulge thine own desire, though it seeks what will ruin thee. Yet wilt thou remember my warning, repentant too late." Then, protesting that she is like to die, she obtains from him that he suffer her to see her sisters, and present to them moreover what gifts she would of golden ornaments; but therewith he ofttimes advised her never at any time, yielding to pernicious counsel, to inquire concerning his bodily form, lest she fall, through unholy curiosity, from so great a height of fortune, nor feel ever his embrace again. "I would die a hundred times," she said, cheerful at last, "rather than be deprived of thy most sweet usage. I love thee as my own soul, beyond comparison even with Love himself. Only bid thy servant Zephyrus bring hither my sisters, as he brought me. My honeycomb! My husband! Thy Psyche's breath of life!" So he promised; and after the embraces of the night, ere the light appeared, vanished from the hands of his bride.

And the sisters, coming to the place where Psyche was abandoned, wept loudly among the rocks, and called upon her by name, so that the sound came down to her, and running out of the palace distraught, she cried, "Wherefore afflict your souls with lamentation? I whom you mourn am here." Then, summoning Zephyrus, she reminded him of her husband's bidding; and he bare them down with a gentle blast. "Enter now," she said, "into my house and relieve your sorrow in the company of Psyche your sister."

And Psyche displayed to them all the treasures of the golden house, and its great family of ministering voices, nursing in them the malice which was already at their hearts. And at last one of them asks curiously who the lord of that celestial array may be, and what manner of man her husband? And Psyche answered dissemblingly, "A young man, handsome and mannerly, with a goodly beard. For the most part he hunts upon the mountains." And lest the secret should slip from her in the way of further speech, loading her sisters with gold and gems, she commanded Zephyrus to bear them away.

And they returned home, on fire with envy. "See now the injustice of fortune!" cried one. "We, the elder children, are given like servants to be the wives of strangers, while the youngest is possessed of so great riches, who scarcely knows how to use them. You saw, Sister! what a hoard of wealth lies in the house; what glittering gowns; what splendour of precious gems, besides all that gold trodden under foot. If she indeed hath, as she said, a bridegroom so goodly, then no one in all the world is happier. And it may be that this husband, being of divine nature, will make her, too, a goddess. Nay! so in truth it is. It was even thus she bore herself. Already she looks aloft and breathes divinity, who, though but a woman, has voices for her handmaidens, and can command the winds." "Think," answered the other, "how arrogantly she dealt with us, grudging us these trifling gifts out of all that store, and when our company became a burden, causing us to be hissed and

driven away from her through the air! But I am no woman if she keep her hold on this great fortune; and if the insult done us has touched thee too, take we counsel together. Meanwhile let us hold our peace, and know nought of her, alive or dead. For they are not truly happy of whose happiness other folk are unaware."

And the bridegroom, whom still she knows not, warns her thus a second time, as he talks with her by night: "Seest thou what peril besets thee? Those cunning wolves have made ready for thee their snares, of which the sum is that they persuade thee to search into the fashion of my countenance, the seeing of which, as I have told thee often, will be the seeing of it no more for ever. But do thou neither listen nor make answer to aught regarding thy husband. Besides, we have sown also the seed of our race. Even now this bosom grows with a child to be born to us, a child if thou but keep our secret, of divine quality; if thou profane it, subject to death." And Psyche was glad at the tidings, rejoicing in that solace of a divine seed, and in the glory of that pledge of love to be, and the dignity of the name of mother. Anxiously she notes the increase of the days, the waning months. And again, as he tarries briefly beside her, the bridegroom repeats his warning: "Even now the sword is drawn with which thy sisters seek thy life. Have pity on thyself, sweet wife, and upon our child, and see not those evil women again." But the sisters make their way into the palace once more, crying to her in wily tones, "O Psyche! and thou too wilt be a mother! How great will be the joy at home! Happy indeed shall we be to have the nursing of the golden child. Truly if he be answerable to the beauty of his parents, it will be a birth of Cupid himself."

So, little by little, they stole upon the heart of their sister. She, meanwhile, bids the lyre to sound for their delight. and the playing is heard: she bids the pipes to move, the quire to sing, and the music and the singing come invisibly, soothing the mind of the listener with sweetest modulation. Yet not even thereby was their malice put to sleep: once more they seek to know what manner of husband she has, and whence that seed. And Psyche, simple overmuch, forgetful of her first story, answers, "My husband comes from a far country, trading for great sums. He is already of middle age, with whitening locks." And therewith she dismisses them again.

And returning home upon the soft breath of Zephyrus one cried to the other, "What shall be said of so ugly a lie? He who was a young man with goodly beard is now in middle life. It must be that she told a false tale: else is she in very truth ignorant what manner of man he is. Howsoever it be, let us destroy her quickly. For if she indeed knows not, be sure that her bridegroom is one of the gods: it is a god she bears in her womb. And let that be far from us! If she be called mother of a god, then will life be more than I can bear."

So, full of rage against her, they returned to Psyche, and said to her craftily, "Thou livest in an ignorant bliss, all incurious of thy real danger It is a deadly serpent, as we certainly know, that comes to sleep at thy side. Remember the words of the oracle.

which declared thee destined to a cruel beast. There are those who have seen it at nightfall, coming back from its feeding. In no long time, they say, it will end its blandishments. It but waits for the babe to be formed in thee, that it may devour thee by so much the richer. If indeed the solitude of this musical place, or it may be the loathsome commerce of a hidden love, delight thee, we at least in sisterly piety have done our part." And at last the unhappy Psyche, simple and frail of soul, carried away by the terror of their words, losing memory of her husband's precepts and her own promise, brought upon herself a great calamity. Trembling and turning pale, she answers them, "And they who tell those things, it may be, speak the truth. For in very deed, never have I seen the face of my husband, nor know I at all what manner of man he is. Always he frights me diligently from the sight of him, threatening some great evil should I too curiously look upon his face. Do ye, if ye can help your sister in her great peril, stand by her now."

Her sisters answered her, "The way of safety we have well considered, and will teach thee. Take a sharp knife, and hide it in that part of the couch where thou art wont to lie: take also a lamp filled with oil, and set it privily behind the curtain. And when he shall have drawn up his coils into the accustomed place, and thou hearest him breathe in sleep, slip then from his side and discover the lamp, and, knife in hand, put forth thy strength, and strike off the serpent's head." And so they departed in haste.

And Psyche left alone (alone but for the furies which beset her) is tossed up and down in her distress, like a wave of the sea; and though her will is firm, yet, in the moment of putting hand to the deed, she falters, and is torn asunder by various apprehension of the great calamity upon her. She hastens and anon delays, now full of distrust, and now of angry courage: under one bodily form she loathes the monster and loves the bridegroom. But twilight ushers in the night; and at length in haste she makes ready for the terrible deed. Darkness came, and the bridegroom; and he first, after some faint essay of love, falls into a deep sleep.

And she, erewhile of no strength, the hard purpose of destiny assisting her, is confirmed in force. With lamp plucked forth, knife in hand, she put by her sex; and lo! as the secrets of the bed became manifest, the sweetest and most gentle of all creatures, Love himself, reclined there, in his own proper loveliness! At sight of him the very flame of the lamp kindled more gladly! But Psyche was afraid at the vision, and, faint of soul, trembled back upon her knees, and would have hidden the steel in her own bosom. But the knife slipped from her hand; and now, undone, yet ofttimes looking upon the beauty of that divine countenance, she lives again. She sees the locks of that golden head, pleasant with the unction of the gods, shed down in graceful entanglement behind and before, about the ruddy cheeks and white throat. The pinions of the winged god, yet fresh with the dew, are spotless upon his shoulders, the delicate plumage wavering over them as they lie at rest. Smooth he was, and, touched with light, worthy of Venus his mother. At the foot of the couch lay his bow and ar-

rows, the instruments of his power, propitious to men.

And Psyche, gazing hungrily thereon, draws an arrow from the quiver, and trying the point upon her thumb, tremulous still, drave in the barb, so that a drop of blood came forth. Thus fell she, by her own act, and unaware, into the love of Love. Falling upon the bridegroom, with indrawn breath, in a hurry of kisses from eager and open lips, she shuddered as she thought how brief that sleep might be. And it chanced that a drop of burning oil fell from the lamp upon the god's shoulder. Ah! maladroit minister of love, thus to wound him from whom all fire comes; though 'twas a lover, I trow, first devised thee, to have the fruit of his desire even in the darkness! At the touch of the fire the god started up, and beholding the overthrow of her faith, quietly took flight from her embraces.

And Psyche, as he rose upon the wing, laid hold on him with her two hands, hanging upon him in his passage through the air, till she sinks to the earth through weariness. And as she lay there, the divine lover, tarrying still, lighted upon a cypress tree which grew near, and, from the top of it, spake thus to her, in great emotion. "Foolish one! unmindful of the command of Venus, my mother, who had devoted thee to one of base degree, I fled to thee in his stead. Now know I that this was vainly done. Into mine own flesh pierced mine arrow, and I made thee my wife, only that I might seem a monster beside thee—that thou shouldst seek to wound the head wherein lay the eyes so full of love to thee! Again and again, I thought to put thee on thy guard concerning these things, and warned thee in love-kindness. Now I would but punish thee by my flight hence." And therewith he winged his way into the deep sky.

Psyche, prostrate upon the earth, and following far as sight might reach the flight of the bridegroom, wept and lamented; and when the breadth of space had parted him wholly from her, cast herself down from the bank of a river which was nigh. But the stream, turning gentle in honour of the god, put her forth again unhurt upon its margin. And as it happened, Pan, the rustic god, was sitting just then by the waterside, embracing, in the body of a reed, the goddess Canna; teaching her to respond to him in all varieties of slender sound. Hard by, his flock of goats browsed at will. And the shaggy god called her, wounded and outworn, kindly to him and said, "I am but a rustic herdsman, pretty maiden, yet wise, by favour of my great age and long experience; and if I guess truly by those faltering steps, by thy sorrowful eyes and continual sighing, thou labourest with excess of love. Listen then to me, and seek not death again, in the stream or otherwise. Put aside thy woe, and turn thy prayers to Cupid. He is in truth a delicate youth: win him by the delicacy of thy service."

So the shepherd-god spoke, and Psyche, answering nothing, but with a reverence to his serviceable deity, went on her way. And while she, in her search after Cupid, wandered through many lands, he was lying in the chamber of his mother, heartsick. And the white bird which floats over the waves plunged in haste into the sea, and approaching Venus, as she bathed, made known to her that her son lies afflicted with some

grievous hurt, doubtful of life. And Venus cried, angrily, "My son, then, has a mistress! And it is Psyche, who witched away my beauty and was the rival of my godhead, whom he loves!"

Therewith she issued from the sea, and returning to her golden chamber, found there the lad, sick, as she had heard, and cried from the doorway, "Well done, truly! to trample thy mother's precepts under foot, to spare my enemy that cross of an unworthy love; nay, unite her to thyself, child as thou art, that I might have a daughter-in-law who hates me! I will make thee repent of thy sport, and the savour of thy marriage bitter. There is one who shall chasten this body of thine, put out thy torch and unstring thy bow. Not till she has plucked forth that hair, into which so oft these hands have smoothed the golden light, and sheared away thy wings, shall I feel the injury done me avenged." And with this she hastened in anger from the doors.

And Ceres and Juno met her, and sought to know the meaning of her troubled countenance. "Ye come in season," she cried; "I pray you, find for me Psyche. It must needs be that ye have heard the disgrace of my house." And they, ignorant of what was done, would have soothed her anger, saying, "What fault, Mistress, hath thy son committed, that thou wouldst destroy the girl he loves? Knowest thou not that he is now of age? Because he wears his years so lightly must he seem to thee ever but a child? Wilt thou for ever thus pry into the pastimes of thy son, always accusing his wantonness, and blaming in him those delicate wiles which are all thine own?" Thus, in secret fear of the boy's bow, did they seek to please him with their gracious patronage. But Venus, angry at their light taking of her wrongs, turned her back upon them, and with hasty steps made her way once more to the sea.

Meanwhile Psyche, tost in soul, wandering hither and thither, rested not night or day in the pursuit of her husband, desiring, if she might not soothe his anger by the endearments of a wife, at the least to propitiate him with the prayers of a handmaid. And seeing a certain temple on the top of a high mountain, she said, "Who knows whether yonder place be not the abode of my lord?" Thither, therefore, she turned her steps, hastening now the more because desire and hope pressed her on, weary as she was with the labours of the way, and so, painfully measuring out the highest ridges of the mountain, drew near to the sacred couches. She sees ears of wheat, in heaps or twisted into chaplets; ears of barley also, with sickles and all the instruments of harvest, lying there in disorder, thrown at random from the hands of the labourers in the great heat. These she curiously sets apart, one by one, duly ordering them; for she said within herself, "I may not neglect the shrines, nor the holy service, of any god there be, but must rather win by supplication the kindly mercy of them all."

And Ceres found her bending sadly upon her task, and cried aloud, "Alas, Psyche! Venus, in the furiousness of her anger, tracks thy footsteps through the world, seeking for thee to pay her the utmost penalty; and thou, thinking of anything rather than thine own safety, hast taken on thee the care of what belongs to me!" Then Psyche fell down at her feet, and sweeping the

floor with her hair, washing the footsteps of the goddess in her tears, besought her mercy, with many prayers: —"By the gladdening rites of harvest, by the lighted lamps and mystic marches of the Marriage and mysterious Invention of thy daughter Proserpine, and by all beside that the holy place of Attica veils in silence, minister, I pray thee, to the sorrowful heart of Psyche! Suffer me to hide myself but for a few days among the heaps of corn, till time have softened the anger of the goddess, and my strength, out-worn in my long travail, be recovered by a little rest."

But Ceres answered her, "Truly thy tears move me, and I would fain help thee; only I dare not incur the ill-will of my kinswoman. Depart hence as quickly as may be." And Psyche, repelled against hope, afflicted now with twofold sorrow, making her way back again, beheld among the half-lighted woods of the valley below a sanctuary builded with cunning art. And that she might lose no way of hope, howsoever doubtful, she drew near to the sacred doors. She sees there gifts of price, and garments fixed upon the door-posts and to the branches of the trees, wrought with letters of gold which told the name of the goddess to whom they were dedicated, with thanksgiving for that she had done. So, with bent knee and hands laid about the glowing altar, she prayed saying, "Sister and spouse of Jupiter! be thou to these my desperate fortunes, Juno the Auspicious! I know that thou dost willingly help those in travail with child; deliver me from the peril that is upon me." And as she prayed thus, Juno in the majesty of her god-head, was straightaway present, and answered, "Would that I might incline favourably to thee; but against the will of Venus, whom I have ever loved as a daughter, I may not, for very shame, grant thy prayer."

And Psyche, dismayed by this new shipwreck of her hope, communed thus with herself, "Whither, from the midst of the snares that beset me, shall I take my way once more? In what dark solitude shall I hide me from the all-seeing eye of Venus? What if I put on at length a man's courage, and yielding myself unto her as my mistress, soften by a humility not yet too late the fierceness of her purpose? Who knows but that I may find him also whom my soul seeketh after, in the abode of his mother?"

And Venus, renouncing all earthly aid in her search, prepared to return to heaven. She ordered the chariot to be made ready, wrought for her by Vulcan as a marriage-gift, with a cunning of hand which had left his work so much the richer by the weight of gold it lost under his tool. From the multitude which housed about the bed-chamber of their mistress, white doves came forth, and with joyful motions bent their painted necks beneath the yoke. Behind it, with playful riot, the sparrows sped onward, and other birds sweet of song, making known by their soft notes the approach of the goddess. Eagle and cruel hawk alarmed not the quireful family of Venus. And the clouds broke away, as the uttermost ether opened to receive her, daughter and goddess, with great joy.

And Venus passed straightway to the house of Jupiter to beg from him the service of Mercury, the god of speech. And Jupiter refused not her prayer. And Venus and Mercury descended

from heaven together; and as they went, the former said to the latter, "Thou knowest, my brother of Arcady, that never at any time have I done anything without thy help; for how long time, moreover, I have sought a certain maiden in vain. And now nought remains but that, by thy heraldry, I proclaim a reward for whomsoever shall find her. Do thou my bidding quickly." And therewith she conveyed to him a little scrip, in the which was written the name of Psyche, with other things; and so returned home.

And Mercury failed not in his office; but departing into all lands, proclaimed that whosoever delivered up to Venus the fugitive girl, should receive from herself seven kisses—one thereof full of the inmost honey of her throat. With that the doubt of Psyche was ended. And now, as she came near to the doors of Venus, one of the household, whose name was Use-and-Wont, ran out to her, crying, "Hast thou learned, Wicked Maid! now at last! that thou hast a mistress?" and seizing her roughly by the hair, drew her into the presence of Venus. And when Venus saw her, she cried out, saying, "Thou hast deigned then to make thy salutations to thy mother-in-law. Now will I in turn treat thee as becometh a dutiful daughter-in-law!"

And she took barley and millet and poppy-seed, every kind of grain and seed, and mixed them together, and laughed, and said to her: "Methinks so plain a maiden can earn lovers only by industrious ministry: now will I also make trial of thy service. Sort me this heap of seed, the one kind from the others, grain by grain; and get thy task done before the evening." And Psyche, stunned by the cruelty of her bidding, was silent, and moved not her hand to the inextricable heap. And there came forth a little ant, which had understanding of the difficulty of her task, and took pity upon the consort of the god of Love; and he ran deftly hither and thither, and called together the whole army of his fellows. "Have pity," he cried, "nimble scholars of the Earth, Mother of all things!—have pity upon the wife of Love, and hasten to help her in her perilous effort." Then, one upon the other, the hosts of the insect people hurried together; and they sorted asunder the whole heap of seed, separating every grain after its kind, and so departed quickly out of sight.

And at nightfall Venus returned, and seeing that task finished with so wonderful diligence, she cried, "The work is not thine, thou naughty maid, but his in whose eyes thou hast found favour." And calling her again in the morning, "See now the grove," she said, "beyond yonder torrent. Certain sheep feed there, whose fleeces shine with gold. Fetch me straightway a lock of that precious stuff, having gotten it as thou mayst."

And Psyche went forth willingly, not to obey the command of Venus, but even to seek a rest from her labour in the depths of the river. But from the river, the green reed, lowly mother of music, spake to her: "O Psyche! pollute not these waters by self-destruction, nor approach that terrible flock; for, as the heat groweth, they wax fierce. Lie down under yon plane-tree, till the quiet of the river's breath have soothed them. Thereafter thou mayst shake down the fleecy gold from the trees of the grove, for it holdeth by the leaves."

And Psyche, instructed thus by the simple reed, in the humanity of its heart, filled her bosom with the soft golden stuff, and returned to Venus. But the goddess smiled bitterly, and said to her, "Well know I who was the author of this thing also. I will make further trial of thy discretion, and the boldness of thy heart. Seest thou the utmost peak of yonder steep mountain? The dark stream which flows down thence waters the Stygian fields, and swells the flood of Cocytus. Bring me now, in this little urn, a draught from its innermost source." And therewith she put into her hands a vessel of wrought crystal.

And Psyche set forth in haste on her way to the mountain, looking there at last to find the end of her hapless life. But when she came to the region which borders on the cliff that was showed to her, she understood the deadly nature of her task. From a great rock, steep and slippery, a horrible river of water poured forth, falling straightway by a channel exceeding narrow into the unseen gulf below. And lo! creeping from the rocks on either hand, angry serpents, with their long necks and sleepless eyes. The very waters found a voice and bade her depart, in smothered cries of, *Depart hence!* and *What doest thou here? Look around thee!* and *Destruction is upon thee!* And then sense left her, in the immensity of her peril, as one changed to stone.

Yet not even then did the distress of this innocent soul escape the steady eye of a gentle providence. For the bird of Jupiter spread his wings and took flight to her, and asked her, "Didst thou think, simple one, even thou; that thou couldst steal one drop of that relentless stream, the holy river of Styx, terrible even to the gods? But give me thine urn." And the bird took the urn, and filled it at the source, and returned to her quickly from among the teeth of the serpents, bringing with him of the waters, all unwilling—nay! warning him to depart away and not molest them.

And she, receiving the urn with great joy, ran back quickly that she might deliver it to Venus, and yet again satisfied not the angry goddess. "My child!" she said, "in this one thing further must thou serve me. Take now this tiny casket, and get thee down even unto hell, and deliver it to Proserpine. Tell her that Venus would have of her beauty so much at least as may suffice for but one day's use, that beauty she possessed erewhile being foreworn and spoiled, through her tendance upon the sick-bed of her son; and be not slow in returning."

And Psyche perceived there the last ebbing of her fortune—that she was now thrust openly upon death, who must go down, of her own motion, to Hades and the Shades. And straightway she climbed to the top of an exceeding high tower, thinking within herself, "I will cast myself down thence: so shall I descend most quickly into the kingdom of the dead." And the tower again broke forth into speech: "Wretched Maid! Wretched Maid! Wilt thou destroy thyself? If the breath quit thy body, then wilt thou indeed go down into Hades, but by no means return hither. Listen to me. Among the pathless wilds not far from this place lies a certain mountain, and therein one of hell's vent-holes. Through the breach a rough way lies open, following which thou wilt come, by straight course, to the castle of Orcus. And thou must not

go empty-handed. Take in each hand a morsel of barley-bread, soaked in hydromel; and in thy mouth two pieces of money. And when thou shalt be now well onward in the way of death, then wilt thou overtake a lame ass laden with wood, and a lame driver, who will pray thee reach him certain cords to fasten the burden which is falling from the ass: but be thou cautious to pass on in silence. And soon as thou comest to the river of the dead, Charon, in that crazy bark he hath, will put thee over upon the further side. There is greed even among the dead: and thou shalt deliver to him, for the ferrying, one of those two pieces of money, in such wise that he take it with his hands from between thy lips. And as thou passest over the stream, a dead old man, rising on the water, will put up to thee his mouldering hands, and pray thee draw him into the ferry-boat. But beware thou yield not to unlawful pity.

"When thou shalt be come over, and art upon the causeway, certain aged women, spinning, will cry to thee to lend thy hand to their work; and beware again that thou take no part therein; for this also is the snare of Venus, whereby she would cause thee to cast away one at least of those cakes thou bearest in thy hands. And think not that a slight matter; for the loss of either one of them will be to thee the losing of the light of day. For a watch-dog exceeding fierce lies ever before the threshold of that lonely house of Proserpine. Close his mouth with one of thy cakes; so shalt thou pass by him and enter straightway into the presence of Proserpine herself. Then do thou deliver thy message, and taking what she shall give thee, return back again; offering to the watch-dog the other cake, and to the ferryman that other piece of money thou hast in thy mouth. After this manner mayst thou return again beneath the stars. But withal, I charge thee, think not to look into, nor open, the casket thou bearest, with that treasure of the beauty of the divine countenance hidden therein."

So spake the stones of the tower; and Psyche delayed not, but proceeding diligently after the manner enjoined, entered into the house of Proserpine, at whose feet she sat down humbly and would neither the delicate couch nor that divine food the goddess offered her, but did straightway the business of Venus. And Proserpine filled the casket secretly, and shut the lid, and delivered it to Psyche, who fled therewith from Hades with new strength. But coming back into the light of day, even as she hasted now to the ending of her service, she was seized by a rash curiosity. "Lo! now," she said within herself, "my simpleness! who, bearing in my hands the divine loveliness, heed not to touch myself with a particle at least therefrom, that I may please the more, by the favour of it, my fair one, my beloved." Even as she spoke, she lifted the lid; and behold! within, neither beauty, nor anything beside, save sleep only, the sleep of the dead, which took hold upon her, filling all her members with its drowsy vapour, so that she lay down in the way and moved not, as in the slumber of death.

And Cupid being healed of his wound, because he would endure no longer the absence of her he loved, gliding through the narrow window of the chamber wherein he was holden, his pinions being now repaired by a little rest, fled forth

swiftly upon them, and coming to the place where Psyche was, shook that sleep away from her, and set him in his prison again, awaking her with the innocent point of his arrow. "Lo! thine old error again," he said, "which had like once more to have destroyed thee! But do thou now what is lacking of the command of my mother: the rest shall be my care." With these words, the lover rose upon the air; and being consumed inwardly with the greatness of his love, penetrated with vehement wing into the highest place of heaven, to lay his cause before the father of the gods. And the father of gods took his hand in his, and kissed his face, and said to him, "At no time, my son, hast thou regarded me with due honour. Often hast thou vexed my bosom, wherein lies the disposition of the stars, with those busy darts of thine. Nevertheless, because thou hast grown up between these mine hands, I will accomplish thy desire." And straightway he bade Mercury call the gods together; and, the council-chamber being filled, sitting upon a high throne, "Ye gods," he said, "all ye whose names are in the white book of the Muses, ye know yonder lad. It seems good to me that his youthful heats should by some means be restrained. And that all occasion may be taken from him, I would even confine him in the bonds of marriage. He has chosen and embraced a mortal maiden. Let him have fruit of his love, and possess her for ever."

Thereupon he bade Mercury produce Psyche in heaven; and holding out to her his ambrosial cup, "Take it," he said, "and live for ever; nor shall Cupid ever depart from thee." And the gods sat down together to the marriage-feast. On the first couch lay the bridegroom, and Psyche in his bosom. His rustic serving-boy bare the wine to Jupiter; and Bacchus to the rest. The Seasons crimsoned all things with their roses. Apollo sang to the lyre, while a little Pan prattled on his reeds, and Venus danced very sweetly to the soft music. Thus, with due rites, did Psyche pass into the power of Cupid; and from them was born the daughter whom men called Voluptas.

Mlle. Musette

Mademoiselle Musette was a pretty girl of twenty who shortly after her arrival in Paris had become what many pretty girls become when they have a neat figure, plenty of coquettishness, a dash of ambition and hardly any education. After having for a long time shone as the star of the supper parties of the Latin Quarter, at which she used to sing in a voice, still very fresh if not very true, a number of country ditties, which earned her the nickname under which she has since been immortalized by one of our neatest rhymesters, Mademoiselle Musette suddenly left the Rue de la Harpe to go and dwell upon the Cytherean heights of the Breda district.

She speedily became one of the foremost of the aristocracy of pleasure and slowly made her way towards that celebrity which consists in being mentioned in the columns devoted to Pari-

sian gossip, or lithographed at the print-sellers.

However, Mademoiselle Musette was an exception to the women amongst whom she lived. Of a nature instinctively elegant and poetical, like all women who are really such, she loved luxury and the many enjoyments which it procures; her coquetry warmly coveted all that was handsome and distinguished; a daughter of the people, she would not have been in any way out of her element amidst the most regal sumptuousity. But Mademoiselle Musette, who was young and pretty, had never consented to be the mistress of any man who was not like herself young and handsome. She had been known bravely to refuse the magnificent offers of an old man so rich that he was styled the Peru of the Chaussée d'Antin, and who had offered a golden ladder to the gratification of her fancies. Intelligent and witty, she had also a repugnance for fools and simpletons, whatever might be their age, their title and their name.

Musette, therefore, was an honest and pretty girl, who in love adopted half of Champfort's famous aphorism, "Love is the interchange of two caprices." Thus her connection had never been preceded by one of those shameful bargains which dishonor modern gallantry. As she herself said, Musette played fair and insisted that she should receive full change for her sincerity.

But if her fancies were lively and spontaneous, they were never durable enough to reach the height of a passion. And the excessive mobility of her caprices, the little care she took to look at the purse and the boots of those who wished to be considered amongst them, brought about a corresponding mobility in her existence which was a perpetual alternation of blue broughams and omnibuses, first floors and fifth stories, silken gowns and cotton frocks. Oh! charming girl! living poem of youth with ringing laugh and joyous song! tender heart beating for one and all beneath your half-open bodice! Oh! Mademoiselle Musette, sister of Bernerette and Mimi Pinson, it would need the pen of Alfred de Musset fitly to narrate your careless and vagabond course amidst the flowery paths of youth; and he would certainly have celebrated you, if like me, he had heard you sing in your pretty false notes, this couplet from one of your favorite ditties:

> "It was a day in Spring
> When love I strove to sing
> Unto a nut-brown maid.
> O'er face as fair as dawn
> A dainty cap of lawn
> Cast a bewitching shade."

The story we are about to tell is one of the most charming in the life of this charming adventuress who wore so many green gowns.

At a time when she was the mistress of a young Counsellor of State, who had gallantly placed in her hands the key of his ancestral coffers, Mademoiselle Musette was in the habit of receiving once a week in her pretty drawing-room in the Rue de la Bruyère. These evenings resembled most Parisian evenings, with the difference that people amused themselves. When there was not enough room they sat on one another's knees, and it often happened that the same glass served for two. Rodolphe, who was a friend of Musette

and never anything more than a friend, without either of them ever knowing why—Rodolphe asked leave to bring his friend, the painter Marcel.

"A young fellow of talent," he added, "for whom the future is embroidering his Academician's coat."

"Bring him," said Musette.

The evening they were to go together to Musette's Rodolphe called on Marcel to fetch him. The artist was at his toilet.

"What!" said Rodolphe, "you are going into society in a colored shirt?"

"Does that shock custom?" observed Marcel quietly.

"Shock custom, it stuns it."

"The deuce," said Marcel, looking at his shirt, which displayed a pattern of boars pursued by dogs, on a blue ground. "I have not another here. Oh! bah! so much the worse, I will put on a collar, and as 'Methuselah' buttons to the neck no one will see the color of my linen."

"What!" said Rodolphe uneasy, "you are going to wear 'Methuselah?' "

"Alas!" replied Marcel, "I must, God wills it and my tailor too; besides it has a new set of buttons and I have just touched it up with ivory black."

"Methuselah" was merely Marcel's dress coat, he called it so because it was the oldest garment of his wardrobe. "Methuselah" was cut in the fashion of four years before, and was, besides, of a hideous green, but Marcel declared that it looked black by candlelight.

In five minutes Marcel was dressed, he was attired in the most perfect bad taste, the get-up of an art student going into society.

M. Casimir Bonjour will never be so surprised the day he learns his election as a member of the Institute as were Rodolphe and Marcel on reaching Mademoiselle Musette's. This is the reason of their astonishment. Mademoiselle Musette who for some time past had fallen out with her lover the Counsellor of State, had been abandoned by him at a very critical juncture. Legal proceedings having been taken by her creditors and her landlord, her furniture had been seized and carried down into the court-yard, in order to be taken away and sold on the following day. Despite this incident Mademoiselle Musette had not for a moment the idea of giving her guests the slip and did not put off her party. She had the court-yard arranged as a drawing-room, spread a carpet on the pavement, prepared everything as usual, dressed to receive company, and invited all the tenants to her little entertainment, towards which Heaven contributed its illumination.

This jest had immense success, never had Musette's evenings displayed such go and gaiety; they were still dancing and singing when the porters came to take away furniture and carpets, and the company were obliged to withdraw. Musette bowed her guests out, singing:

"They will laugh long and loud, tralala,
At my Thursday night's crowd
They will laugh long and loud, tralala."

Marcel and Rodolphe alone remained with Musette, who ascended to her room where there was nothing left but the bed.

"Ah, but my adventure is no longer such a lively one after all," said Musette; "I shall have to take up my quarters out-of-doors."

"Oh! madame," said Marcel, "if I had the gifts of Plutus I should like to

offer you a temple finer than that of Solomon, but—"

"You are not Plutus. All the same I thank you for your good intentions. Ah!" she added, glancing round the room, "I was getting bored here, and then the furniture was old. I had had it nearly six months. But that is not all, after the dance one should sup."

"Let us sup-pose," said Marcel, who had an itch of punning, above all in the morning, when he was terrible.

As Rodolphe had gained some money at the lansquenet played during the evening, he carried off Musette and Marcel to a restaurant which was just opening.

After breakfast, the three, who had no inclination for sleep, spoke of finishing the day in the country, and as they found themselves close to the railway-station they got into the first train that started, and which landed them at Saint Germain.

During the whole of the night of the party and all the rest of the day Marcel, who was gunpowder which a single glance sufficed to kindle, had been violently smitten by Mademoiselle Musette and paid her "highly-colored court," as he put it to Rodolphe. He even went so far as to propose to the pretty girl to buy her furniture handsomer than the last with the result of the sale of his famous picture "The Passage of the Red Sea." Hence the artist saw with pain the moment arrive when it became necessary to part from Musette, who, whilst allowing him to kiss her hands, neck and sundry other accessories, gently repulsed him every time that he tried violently to burgle her heart.

On reaching Paris, Rodolphe left his friend with the girl, who asked the artist to see her to her door.

"Will you allow me to call on you?" asked Marcel; "I will paint your portrait."

"My dear fellow," replied she, "I cannot give you my address, since tomorrow I may no longer have one; but I will call and see you, and I will mend your coat, which has a hole so big that one could shoot the moon through it."

"I will await your coming like that of the Messiah," said Marcel.

"Not quite so long," said Musette, laughing.

"What a charming girl," said Marcel to himself, as he slowly walked away; "she is the Goddess of Mirth. I will make two holes in my coat."

He had not gone twenty paces before he felt himself tapped on the shoulder. It was Mademoiselle Musette.

"My dear Monsieur Marcel," said she, "are you a true knight?"

"I am. 'Rubens and my lady,' that is my motto."

"Well, then, hearken to my woes and pity take, most noble sir," returned Musette, who was slightly tinged with literature, although she murdered grammar in fine style; "the landlord has taken away the key of my room and it is eleven o'clock at night. Do you understand?"

"I understand," said Marcel, offering Musette his arm. He took her to his studio on the Quai aux Fleurs.

Musette was hardly able to keep awake, but still had strength enough to say to Marcel, taking him by the hand, "You remember what you have promised."

"Oh! Musette, charming creature!" said the artist in a somewhat moved

tone, "you are here beneath a hospitable roof, sleep in peace. Good-night, I am off."

"Why so?" said Musette, her eyes half-closed; "I am not afraid, I can assure you. In the first place, there are two rooms, I will sleep on your sofa."

"My sofa is too hard to sleep on, it is stuffed with carded pebbles. I will give you hospitality here, and ask it for myself from a friend who lives on the same landing. It will be more prudent," said he; "I usually keep my word, but I am twenty-two and you are eighteen, Musette,—and I am off. Good-night."

The next morning at eight o'clock Marcel entered her room with a pot of flowers that he had gone and bought in the market. He found Musette, who had thrown herself fully dressed on the bed, and was still sleeping. At the noise made by him she woke, and held out her hand.

"What a good fellow," said she.

"Good fellow," repeated Marcel, "is not that a term of ridicule?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Musette, "why should you say that to me? It is not nice. Instead of saying spiteful things offer me that pretty pot of flowers."

"It is, indeed, for you that I have brought them up," said Marcel. "Take it, and in return for my hospitality sing me one of your songs, the echo of my garret may perhaps retain something of your voice, and I shall still hear you after you have departed."

"Oh! so you want to show me the door?" said Musette. "Listen, Marcel, I do not beat about the bush to say what my thoughts are. You like me and I like you. It is not love, but it is perhaps its seed. Well, I am not going away, I am going to stop here, and I shall stay here as long as the flowers you have just given me remain unfaded."

"Ah!" exclaimed Marcel, "they will fade in a couple of days. If I had known I would have brought immortelles."

* * * * * * *

For a fortnight Musette and Marcel lived together, and led, although often without money, the most charming life in the world. Musette felt for the artist an affection which had nothing in common with her preceding passions; and Marcel began to fear that he was seriously in love with his mistress. Ignorant that she herself was very much afraid of being equally smitten, he glanced every morning at the condition of the flowers, the death of which was to bring about the severance of their connection, and found it very difficult to account for their continued freshness. But he soon had a key to the mystery. One night, waking up, he no longer found Musette beside him. He rose, hastened into the next room, and perceived his mistress, who profited nightly by his slumbers to water the flowers and hinder them from perishing.

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Cimon, the Brute

In the island of Cyprus there once lived a nobleman of the name of Aristippus, a man of great wealth and possessions. Fortune favoured him in all things, except in regard to one of his sons, who, indeed, exceeded all the young men of his own age in stature and beauty of person, but whose mind seemed lost in hopeless idiocy. His true name was Galeso, but as he was not susceptible of any kind of instruction, and could neither by indulgence nor threats be taught anything, he became, from his gross and deformed speech and brutal manners, the scorn of all who knew him, and was in derision called Cimon, or the Brute. The course of life which he led was a source of great grief to his noble father, who now lost all hopes of his recovery, and in order to avoid having so sad an object always before his eyes, gave orders that he should be carried to one of his farms in the country, and should there reside with the peasants and labourers. Cimon himself was delighted with this change, as a rural life and the rude and unrestrained conversation of the country people were preferred by him to the polished manners of the city.

Living thus in a retired village, and amusing himself in rural occupations, it happened that one day about noon, as he was passing through the fields from one farm to another with his staff on his shoulder, he came to a small grove or thicket of trees, one of the most beautiful in the country, and which, it being now the month of May, was in full leaf. When he had passed through this thicket, it came to pass that (as if guided by good fortune) he entered upon a fair meadow, surrounded by trees, on one side of which there was a beautiful and cool fountain, and near it on the soft grass he saw a beautiful damsel asleep, whose graceful form was easily traced through her light and delicate vesture. At her feet reposed two maids and a man, who were her servants. Cimon's steps were suddenly arrested, and leaning on his staff, he paused to gaze upon the lady as if he had never before seen the form of a woman, and without uttering a word he remained with his eyes fixed on her with the most intent admiration, and in his rugged breast, on which all art and instruction had been exercised in vain, there now awoke a spark which seemed to whisper to his rude mind that this damsel was the most enchanting being ever seen by human eyes.

He then began to count her several beauties, praising her hair, rich as gold, then her forehead, her nose and mouth, her neck and ears, and above all her delicate bosom; and becoming thus suddenly transformed from a rude clown to an arbiter of beauty, he was seized with a desire to behold her eyes, which were now closed in deep slumbers. His first thoughts were to awake her for that purpose, but she so far excelled in beauty all other women whom he had seen, that he was overawed, and regarded her as more than mortal and a goddess; and his mind was now so far endued with reason, that he considered divine and celestial things worthy of more respect than terrestrial objects; and on this account he forbore to dis-

turb her, patiently awaiting until she should herself awake, and although the time seemed tedious, he yet had not power to move from the spot. After some little time, it happened that the lady, whose name was Iphigenia, awoke before any of her attendants, and looking up, saw, to her great astonishment, Cimon leaning on his staff regarding her. Addressing him by name, "Cimon," she said, "whither art thou wandering, and what seekest thou in the wood?" for Cimon as well for the beauty of his person and rude manners, as the rank and riches of his father, was known to all the country round. Cimon did not make any reply to the words of Iphigenia, but as soon as he saw her beautiful eyes open, he gazed on them intently, receiving from them an intense delight which he had never before experienced; but the young lady seeing him obstinately persist in his admiration, and apprehending some rudeness from him, awakened her servants, and suddenly departing, said, "Adieu, Cimon!" To which Cimon, to her great surprise, replied, "Not so, for I will accompany you;" and notwithstanding the endeavours of the young lady to be rid of him, she could not prevent his attending her until she arrived at her house. From thence he hastened home to his father, informing him that he was resolved to remain no longer in the country; which intelligence was very unpleasing to the father, yet he consented to his wishes, waiting to see his motives for this sudden change.

Cimon being now pierced to the heart,—a heart which had been hitherto proof to all human sympathy,—by the beauty of Iphigenia, in a very short time excited great amazement in his father and kindred, and all that knew him, by the unlooked-for alteration in the temper of his mind. He requested, in the first place, that he might be habited and treated as his brothers were, to which his father gladly consented. He then sought the society of young and gallant men of his own years, adopting in every respect the manners of a gentleman. Devoting himself to learning, he soon became well instructed in philosophy; and soon afterwards (love to Iphigenia being the sole cause of this happy change) not only was his harsh and rude voice modulated to the expressions of polished life, but he became enamoured of music, and sang and played with skill, and at the same time excelled in riding and in all martial exercises, as he was naturally possessed of great strength and courage. To be brief, he had not yet finished the fourth year from the day of his first falling in love, when he became the most accomplished cavalier, both in learning and manners, that was to be found in the island of Cyprus. Cimon, though loving Iphigenia to such excess, was, as young men in his situation often are, not a little capricious; but his father considering that his passion had wrought this wonderful change in him, patiently bore his humours, in the hopes of contributing to his happiness. He could not, however, prevail on him to assume his proper name of Galeso, for recollecting that Iphigenia had addressed him by his usual appellation, he persisted in retaining the name of Cimon.

Cimon wishing now to crown his desires, made many petitions to Cipseus the father of Iphigenia, to bestow her on him in marriage; but her father replied that he had already betrothed her

to Pasimunda, a nobleman of Rhodes, with whom he was bound to keep his promise; and the period agreed on for the nuptials being now arrived and the intended husband having sent for his bride, Cimon said to himself, "Now is the time, Iphigenia, to prove my honourable passion. Through love to thee I am raised to the dignity of a man, and if I can possess thee, I do not doubt that I shall be happier than any mortal, and I am resolved to make thee my own or die in the attempt." Acting in conformity to this resolution, he secretly prevailed on some young men of rank, his friends, to assist him in his enterprise, and preparing with great secrecy an armed vessel with every requisite for a naval fight, he put to sea, and awaited the sailing of the ship on board of which Iphigenia was to embark for Rhodes.

In the course of a few days, after an honourable entertainment had been given by her father to the friends of her intended husband, the vessel, on receiving Iphigenia, set sail and directed her course to Rhodes. Cimon, who was so vigilant that he could not close his eyes in sleep, intercepted them the next day with his vessel of war, and called from the deck of his own ship to those on board the vessel of Iphigenia to stay their course and strike their sails or expect to be sunk in the sea. The adversaries of Cimon were not to be daunted by words, and immediately stood on their defence, upon which Cimon ordered the grappling-irons to be brought, with which he firmly grappled the Rhodian ship, and leaping on board with his drawn sword, and with the fury of a lion, he dispersed the crew, who in a panic threw down their arms, and with one voice confessed themselves his prisoners. Cimon then addressing them, said, "Young men, it is neither a desire of booty nor enmity to you that has induced me to sail out of Cyprus and attack you thus in the open sea. All my desire is that you yield up the lady you have on board, who is all the world to me, and you may then pursue your voyage; for not being able to obtain her from her father in an amicable manner, I have been thus compelled to appear as an enemy to rescue her from the hands of Pasimunda. Deliver her, then, up to me, and depart in peace." The young men, from force rather than compliance, then surrendered Iphigenia, weeping, to Cimon, who seeing her tears, said, "Noble lady, do not alarm yourself. I am no other than your faithful Cimon, who for the long affection I have borne you deserve much more than Pasimunda to possess you." Then carrying her on board his own ship, he introduced her to his companions, and allowed the Rhodians to depart without further molestation.

Cimon's happiness being now complete in the seizure of so noble a prey, after having devoted some time to console Iphigenia, who still sat weeping, he held a council with his friends, when they resolved not to return immediately to Cyprus, but to direct their course to Crete, where most of them, but particularly Cimon, having many relations and friends, they hoped to be favourably received and to place Iphigenia in safety. They had, however, scarcely resolved on this plan, when Fortune, who had before been so kind to Cimon in giving him possession of his beloved Iphigenia, with her usual inconstancy suddenly changed the rapture of the enamoured youth into the deepest sorrow;

for four hours were not yet completed since the departure of the Rhodians, when dark night surprised them as Cimon conversing with his fair mistress, and a furious tempest arose, with contrary winds, obscuring the sky to such a degree that the mariners could scarcely see to work the ship. It would be impossible to describe the grief of Cimon, for it now seemed to him that the gods had granted his wishes only to the end that he should die in greater affliction, losing both his life and his love at the same time. His friends likewise were not less sensible to their misfortune, but above all Iphigenia, who, terrified at the raging sea, wept bitterly, reproaching Cimon for his violent passion, and affirming that so dreadful a tempest could only arise from the anger of the gods, who would not permit him to possess her against her will, and thus punished his presumption by dooming him to see her perish miserably. Amidst these bitter lamentations, the storm increasing more and more, the mariners, being ignorant of their course, were, unknown to themselves, carried to the island of Rhodes, and being eager to save their lives, they endeavoured to gain the first land that presented itself to them. In this Fortune favoured them, and carried them into a small sheltered bay, in which the Rhodian ship boarded by Cimon had just before taken refuge. They were, however, not aware that they were driven on the island of Rhodes until the next morning, when, the storm subsiding, they saw themselves at little more than an arrow's flight distant from the ship which they had encountered the day before.

Cimon became not a little alarmed at this circumstance, and fearing what in fact afterwards befell him, he commanded every effort to be made to escape from the island, and leave it to Fortune to carry them whither she pleased, since it was impossible that they could fall into a greater danger. The mariners exerted their skill and force to the utmost, but were unable to stir, as the violence of the wind would not allow them to escape out of the bay, and they were, notwithstanding all their endeavours, at last driven on shore and instantly recognised by the Rhodians. A party of the latter immediately ran to the neighbouring town and informed some young noblemen of Rhodes of the event, narrating how Cimon had seized upon Iphigenia, and carried her on board his ship, and had been subsequently driven on shore in the island. On hearing this intelligence, the young noblemen, accompanied by many men of the city, ran with all speed to the sea-coast, and meeting with Cimon and his comrades, who were hastening into the woods for safety, they made them all prisoners and carried them, together with Iphigenia, to the city. No sooner had they arrived there than Lysimachus, who was that year chief magistrate of the Rhodians, with a large body of armed men immediately led Cimon and his friends to prison, at the moment that Pasimunda, whom these tidings had just reached, was making his complaints to the Senate. In this unhappy manner the unfortunate and enamoured Cimon lost his Iphigenia almost as soon as he had won her, his love being only poorly requited with a single kiss.

Iphigenia met with a kind reception from the noble ladies of Rhodes, who endeavoured to comfort her for the misfortune of her being seized by Cimon

and the fatigues of her voyage, and with these ladies she remained until the day appointed for her marriage. At the earnest entreaties of several Rhodian gentlemen who were in the ship with Iphigenia, and had their liberty given them by Cimon, both Cimon and his companions had their lives spared, although Pasimunda used all his interest to have them put to death. They were, nevertheless, condemned to perpetual imprisonment, from which Cimon despaired of any deliverance; but as Pasimunda was making preparations for his nuptials with all despatch, Fortune, as if repenting of her late injustice to Cimon, prepared a new event to console him in his deep affliction. It happened, then, that Pasimunda had a brother, younger indeed than himself, but in nowise inferior to him in good qualities. He was called Ormisda, and it had long been expected that he should marry a beautiful and noble young lady of the city called Cassandra, of whom Lysimachus was also violently enamoured, though from one cause or other the marriage had been long delayed. Now Pasimunda, wishing to celebrate his nuptials with great magnificence, in order to lessen the expense, was desirous that Ormisda should be married at the same time; and mentioning it to his brother, he consulted with the parents of the lady, who expressed their consent to the measure. When this reached the ears of Lysimachus he was disconcerted beyond measure, for he felt assured that if he could prevent Ormisda from marrying her he should possess her himself. He, however, dissembled his fears, and began to consider in what way he could obstruct the marriage, but saw no possible mode except that of carrying off Cassandra by force. This appeared an easy matter to him, from his high office in the state, but he deemed it dishonourable to use his power for such an end.

After a long deliberation, however, his honour gave way to his love, and he resolved, whatever might be the consequence, to possess himself of Cassandra's person; and considering which of his friends could assist him, and of the conduct of his enterprise, he recollected Cimon, whom with his companions he held in imprisonment; and it occurring to him that he could not have a better and more faithful assistant than Cimon in this affair, he commanded him the next evening to be secretly introduced into his chamber, and addressed him in the following manner: "Cimon, as the gods are bountiful and liberal benefactors to men, so do they likewise make proof of their virtues, that to those whom they find constant and firm in all changes of fortune, they may give the reward of their valour, and crown them agreeably to their merits. Wishing to have experience of thy virtue beyond the bounds of thy father's house, whom I know to be a man abounding in riches, at first by the overruling passion of love elevating thee, as I have heard, from a brutal condition to the dignity of man, they have tried thee with a grievous misfortune, and have now cast thee into prison in order to see if thy mind be still as constant as when Fortune favoured thee by giving thee possession of thy mistress. Wherefore, if thy constancy of mind remains the same as heretofore, the gods can give thee no greater reward than her whom they are now prepared to bestow on thee again, and in order to animate

thy courage, I will show thee the means of accomplishing this object. Know then that Pasimunda, who rejoices at thy misfortune and earnestly endeavours to procure thy death, is making all haste to celebrate his marriage with thy Iphigenia, and thus enjoy the prize which Fortune first granted and afterwards snatched from thee. Now, if thou lovest Iphigenia, as I believe thou dost, it must fill thy soul with affliction, as I know from my own fate, for a similar injury will be offered to me on the same day by Ormisda, the brother of Pasimunda, who is on the point of robbing me of Cassandra, the sole object of my life and love. And to avoid such injuries, I do not see that Fortune has left us any other means than our valour and our swords, with which thou must accomplish the second seizure of thy lady, and I the first of mine. Thou seest, then, that if thou wishest to regain not only thy liberty, which, if I judge aright, is only valuable to thee with thy mistress, but also thy mistress herself, the gods, if thou art willing to assist me in my enterprise, will once more place her in thy hands."

These words seemed like new life to the despairing Cimon, who thus instantly replied to Lysimachus: "Thou canst not, Lysimachus, have a more faithful and valiant friend than myself, if indeed the reward is to be such as thou sayest. Acquaint me therefore with thy wishes, which shall be executed with courage and despatch." To which Lysimachus replied, "Know, then, that three days hence the new brides will be claimed by their husbands, and the nuptials celebrated at the house of Pasimunda, when thyself and I, with some of my own friends, will, by favour of the night, enter the house, and bearing off the brides by force in the midst of the solemnity, will carry them to a ship which I have secretly prepared for the purpose, killing all persons who may oppose us in our enterprise." Cimon expressed himself highly satisfied with this plan, and remained contented in prison, without revealing a word to his comrades, until the expected day arrived.

The day of the marriage being come, the nuptials were celebrated with great pomp and magnificence, and Pasimunda's house was filled with joy and festivity. Lysimachus, after having arranged all things, and Cimon and his companions and also his own friends being prepared, and the time being now arrived, he first addressed a few animating words to his people, and then divided them into three parties, one of which he prudently despatched to the harbour, that they might not meet with any interruption in going on board their ship and making their escape, and with the other two parties he then proceeded to the house of Pasimunda. They suddenly entered the hall, where they found the brides with a numerous company all seated at supper. Rushing forward among the attendants, they threw down the tables, and Cimon and Lysimachus, each of them laying hold of his mistress, delivered them into the hands of their followers to be carried on board their ship. The brides and the ladies shrieked, and the whole house was instantly filled with terror and alarm, but Cimon and Lysimachus and their friends made way for themselves with their drawn swords. As they came to descend the stairs, Pasimunda presented himself with a huge club and opposed

their exit, but Cimon smote him so severe a blow on the head that he fell dead on the spot. Ormisda running to his brother's aid, was at the same moment slain, and several others besides, by the companions of Lysimachus and Cimon. Leaving the house thus filled with blood, tears, and lamentations, without any further interruption they carried off their brides in triumph. They had no sooner embarked than the shore was crowded with armed men who came to the rescue of the ladies, but, diligently plying their oars, they happily got out to sea, and arriving in Crete, were joyfully received by their relations.

They there celebrated their nuptials with great joy and festivity, and thus reaped the reward of their love and courage. Cyprus and Rhodes were long disturbed by this affair, but in the end, by the intervention of noble friends and kindred, and after the lapse of some time, Cimon found the happy means to return home to Cyprus with Iphigenia, and Lysimachus carried his beloved Cassandra to Rhodes, each leading a long and happy life in his own country.

The White Butterfly

Bertha has just completed her seventeenth year, that beautiful age when love commences to whisper sweet secrets into a maiden's heart. But ah! exacting Cupid, for every secret he confides to her he draws forth a sigh.

Bertha has a mirror, and as she looks into it and gazes at herself, she smiles. And she has cause to smile with satisfaction, for the mirror reflects a most charming face. Whatever uneasiness love may have caused in her breast, the reflection in the mirror has power to dissipate it.

Why so? We shall see.

What does her heart say to her? That she feels sad? Why? For the following reason: She does not know where she heard that men are ungrateful and false, but it makes her sigh to think about it. And what does her mirror do to console her? It shows her that she is beautiful, for she has bright, black eyes, and fresh, rosy cheeks. So her heart regains hope, and she smiles.

This is the mood in which we find her.

Up to the present time she has passed her life in the careless enjoyment of childhood. She remained a child until she reached her seventeenth year; but a frolicsome, gay, restless, daring, mischievous child. She used to turn the house topsy-turvy, and would have been capable of doing so with the world itself, for she was not afraid of anything. By day she was as wild as a hawk; at night she slept as peaceful as a lamb.

Her mother died before she hardly knew her, and she had her portrait at the head of her bed; but that sweet and yet severe face was not enough to restrain the thoughtless child. Furthermore, she was an only child, and her father adored her. Besides all this, her nurse, who was also the housekeeper,

doted on her and shielded her faults, because she loved her as the apple of her eye. Nothing was lacking to turn an angelic being into an imp of mischief, for Bertha was so vivacious and so restless, she was prone to all sorts of mischief. If she were crossed, she would burst into tears, but what tears! In the midst of her weeping she would burst out laughing, for her heart was full of glee; spontaneous, contagious mirth, like the joyousness of the birds at the break of day. But alas! Her joy was not to last, and whether she liked it or not, a day would surely come in which Bertha would become more sedate, as it was not likely that she would be so wild all her life.

That day arrived. Bertha's noisy joyousness decreases and grows dim as a storm which passes away, or like a sky clouded over.

The nurse is the first to observe the change in Bertha, and although she was always pleased at her pranks and capers, yet she felt overjoyed to see her become more serious, pensive, and silent. The child is now a woman. She has left the carelessness of childhood to become serious and sedate. Poor nurse! She does not know youth is more dangerous than childhood.

Bertha seems like another being, and it has come on suddenly—in the twinkling of an eye. Well, this seriousness suits her. She appears better, more charming, more womanly. Nevertheless the house seems dull, for her gayety, her songs, her noisy mirth are no longer heard. The nurse is glad to see her so quiet, so discreet, but yet she misses her careless laugh, which used to fill the house with gladness.

Bertha used to get up at daybreak, but she does not arise so early now. Does she sleep more? If she does, she eats less, and that is not the worst; at intervals she heaves deep sighs, which make one's heart ache to hear.

The nurse, capable of waging war against his Satanic majesty in her behalf, idolizes her, and notices everything, but keeps silent. But she feels it all the same, so whenever she hears Bertha sigh, she twists her mouth, winks, and says to herself:

"Humph, she has gotten it now."

Of course she could not keep quiet very long, for she was not a woman to keep her mouth closed. She was eaten up with curiosity, because, as she remarked, "The bread depends on the baking."

She kept silent to give Bertha a chance to confess, but Bertha kept her lips tightly closed. So the nurse, finding that she had lost the key to her confidence, resolved to force the lock.

One day she went right to the point, and entered Bertha's room, where she found her fastening a bright red pink in her hair.

"That's what I like," she said. "What a beautiful pink! It looks as red as fire, but you have none like it among your flowers."

Bertha lowered her eyes.

"Well," added the nurse, "do you think I am a child, when you know that nothing ever escapes me? How now, have you lost your tongue?"

Bertha turned as red as a peony.

"Bah!" cried the nurse. "That pink came flying from the terrace opposite your balcony. I can see the flower-pot from here. Yesterday it had four pinks, and now has only three. So it was your neighbor! Humph! what

folly! This has neither head nor tail!"

Bertha turned pale and looked at her nurse, fixedly, as though she did not understand her.

"I didn't mean that you ought to be a nun, nor that your neighbor is worthless chaff, but you deserve to have a king, at the very least. Bertha, this does not amount to anything. Just to make two or three signs to each other from one balcony to the other, exchange small sidelong glances, and then?—what? Nothing at all, and soon afterwards, you will not even remember that you ever met."

Bertha shook her head.

"You say it's not true?" asked the nurse.

"Of course not!" replied Bertha.

"Why not? Let's see. Why not? Who can assure you of it?"—Bertha did not let her finish.

"Our vows," she said.

"Vows!" cried the nurse, making the sign of the cross on her breast. "So that's what's the matter! Bah," she added scornfully. "Only idle words which melt into air." But some recollection of her youth must have recurred to her just then, for she sighed, and added:—"Well, what then? Are they the first vows that have ever been broken? You have no eyes for anybody else today, but how will it be tomorrow?"

"I shall always love him," said Bertha.

"Worse and worse," added the nurse; "because then he will be the one to break it off, and you cannot imprison the air. What are you going to say? That he is young, handsome! What a goose; is he less a man for all that? Do you know what men are?"

Bertha drew near her nurse, and putting her hand over her mouth, said:

"No, no, I don't want to know."

The nurse went out of the room holding her hands to her head, mumbling: "She is crazy as a loon."

Now Bertha has a father, and we'll soon see that, without being a genius, he was not an ordinary man.

He looked like a man over sixty years old, but one cannot trust to looks, for he was only forty-nine. Men quite young, who were companions of his youth, still live in the city, but Bertha's father lost his wife when he was very young, and his loneliness embittered his life. He liquidated his affairs, and retired from business, and buried himself alive, and grew old all at once. That is, he devoted himself to taking care of his daughter, in whom he saw the image of the woman he had lost.

Bertha! That name held all that was dear to him, but it was bittersweet, for there is no earthly cup of bliss without a drop of gall. On seeing him pace up and down his room, from one end to another, look up to the ceiling or down on the floor, stop, and then go on, bite his nails, clutch his hair, one might think that the sky was about to fall, or that the earth would open under his feet.

Suddenly he struck his head with his hand and drew near the door, drew aside the *portieres,* stretched out his neck, and tried to say something, but instead, remained with his mouth wide open. The cause of his surprise was the nurse, who approached without noticing him, gesticulating wildly, as if

she must have discovered some startling fact.

Bertha's father drew back as the nurse came into the room. Both looked at each other as though it were the first time they had ever met.

"What's the matter, Juana?" said he. "You look as I have never seen you look before."

"Well, you look glum enough. If it is time that the dead come to life, why, as for you, you must have risen out of your grave, that's clear as day."

Bertha's father raised his eyebrows, heaved a deep sigh, and sitting down as though overcome by his feelings, inquired again:

"What's the matter now?"

"Well, the Evil One has entered this house."

"Is it possible?" said he. "Heavens! if you care to add that not half an hour ago he left this room, you would not be far from the truth."

"The saints preserve us!" exclaimed the nurse. "The Evil One was here?"

"Yes, Juana, it was himself, in person."

"And you saw him?"

"I saw him."

"What a dreadful visitor," said Juana, making the sign of the cross.

"No," replied Bertha's father, "he is not dreadful, for he has taken the shape of a beautiful youth, who looks something like a gay Lothario."

"And how did the fiend get in?"

"By the door, Juana, by the door."

"Without knocking, without waiting for anybody to open the door."

"That's the way of the devil," replied Bertha's father. "He gets in everywhere. I didn't expect him. I was reading that book which is open on the table, and on turning the leaf, I felt a current of cold air, and raising my eyes saw him before me. I was dumfounded. I tried to stand up, but he placed his hand on my shoulder and made me keep my seat, while he laughed at me in my face—that is, he made a thousand excuses for coming in so unceremoniously, while at the same time he was so familiar that before I offered him a seat he sat down."

The housekeeper heard it all without winking, and might have thought Bertha's father was jesting, if the terror depicted on his face had not testified to the truth of his assertion. Furthermore, he never jested with anyone. Was he crazy? Crazy! A man of so much discretion! Impossible!

The nurse made the sign of the cross mentally, without knowing what to think of what she had just heard.

"Well," she asked, "whom did he want?"

"He came direct to the mark, and wanted to make a compact with me."

"A compact!" cried Juana.

"Yes, and now what do you think he wanted?"

"What?" asked Juana.

"He wanted"—he stopped as though making a great effort, and clasping his hands, cried:

"He wants to marry Bertha!"

"Bertha!" exclaimed Juana, again making the sign of the cross on her breast.

"Yes, indeed. He came openly to ask for her hand," said Bertha's father.

"And you shouted a *no* as big as a house to him."

"Alas, Juana, one cannot deny the Evil One so easily. I could not withstand him. I could not defend myself,

so he has obtained my consent, but what shall I do now? He is young, rich and handsome; has a sweet voice, but says things which terrify one. What will become of Bertha? No, I cannot get accustomed to the idea of her marriage. I said yes, but now that he is not here, for you must know that his presence ties my tongue and fastens my hands—"

"What a man!" exclaimed the nurse, thoughtfully.

Bertha's father was kind-hearted, and had a good opinion of men, so he shook his head mournfully and answered:

"No man would be so cruel, for if he takes Bertha from me it will kill me. How horrible! They will get married, and my poor Bertha will be united to her father's destroyer."

The nurse crossed her arms and was silent for a moment, but suddenly said:

"But Bertha will surely refuse him!"

A bitter smile appeared on the unhappy father's lips, but the nurse added:

"We'll see!"

So off she went after Bertha, but at the same moment the *portiere* was drawn, and Bertha entered the room.

The red pink flamed in her black tresses like a fire in the shade, her eyes sparkled with a singular light, and an irrevocable resolution was stamped on her features. She looked alternately at her father and the nurse, while with a trembling voice she said:

"I have heard all about it. The happiness of my whole life is wrapped up in him, for that man is the master of my heart."

She smiled at her father, and then at her nurse, and then quietly left the room with the same self-possession with which she had entered it.

The nurse and her father were dumfounded.

So the Evil One had entered Bertha's house, and had taken possession of her, as though she had always belonged to him. He passed all the time there, morning, noon and evening, and there was no way of avoiding his calls, because Bertha was always ready to receive him. Neither was it an easy matter to get vexed with him, for he had the charm of a happy disposition; so one could not only feel resigned, but rejoice at his coming.

Furthermore, neither Bertha's father nor the nurse dared to look askance at him, and they could not understand the spell which made them receive him gladly, with joy in their eyes and smiles on their lips.

This was what occurred when they were under the spell of his presence, but when he was absent they would abuse him to their heart's content. And they had cause to complain; for since he took the house by storm, everybody bowed to his will. He was the only one to make plans, or give orders, because Bertha obeyed him implicitly, and so all they could do was to follow in her steps and keep quiet.

But they plotted behind his back to drive him out of the house. Because Bertha's father considered him an usurper, and her nurse, a tyrant. But how could they drive him away? Two ways occurred to them, to retreat, or to defend themselves. To run off was the plan of Bertha's father, more in keeping with his meek disposition. To run off to the end of the world. But the nurse replied:

"To run off! What nonsense! Where could we go where he could not follow? Where could we hide, where he would not find us? No! That's nonsense! What we must do, is to brace ourselves against the wall, and defend ourselves."

"Defend ourselves!" cried Bertha's father, "with what weapons, with what strength?"

"Neither strength nor weapons are necessary," said the nurse. "Some day, just shut the door on him; if the door is shut in his face, the Evil One himself will go off."

"No, that's foolish," said Bertha's father; "if he does not come through the door, he will come in at the window, or down the chimney."

Juana bit her lips and remained thoughtful, because she could never understand how he could have entered the house the first time, for the door was always fastened, and never opened without her consent. She was very cautious, and wanted to know who went in and out. How did he get in without being seen or heard? She had questioned Bertha, who simply answered that he came in without knocking, because he found the door open. But the nurse thought it was impossible, so she was preoccupied because the fiend had come in through the closed door. So the plot hung on either running away or defending themselves, and Bertha's father and the nurse were so anxious and upset that a feather might have knocked them over.

Now who was the man who had thus subdued them—chained them to his will, and made himself the master of Bertha's heart?

His name was Adrian Baker. He had no family, and was very wealthy. That was all they knew. He was young, tall, slender and graceful, had golden hair, and a complexion fair as snow. He was vivacious, passionate and ardent, with a steady, questioning or sad gaze. His eyes were blue—dark as the ocean. His manners were charming, frank, affectionate and simple.

He used to enter the house and mount the stairs in four jumps. Nobody could stop him. If he met Bertha's father, he would open his arms and embrace him, while the poor man trembled from head to foot. If the housekeeper came out to meet him, he would rest his hand on her shoulder, and he always had some bright saying, some flattering word, which affected her in a singular manner. She felt thrilled, as though she had suddenly grown young again.

There was no way of resisting the irresistible charm of his presence. But when he would look at Bertha, his eyes would shine like a cat's in the dark.

Juana noticed that Bertha turned pale under the power of his eye, and bowed her head as if yielding to a stronger will than her own. She also observed that that fiendish man would suddenly become pensive, lean his chin on his hand, and frown as though at some unseen and mysterious foe—then arouse himself suddenly, smile, talk, and be merry again.

Bertha's father also noticed that he knew about everything, as though he possessed the key of knowledge. Bertha's father and the nurse would tell each other about their observations, full of wonder and annoyance.

Sometimes, seated by Bertha, he would amuse himself by ripping out the thread or silk with which she was em-

broidering, or in cutting up paper into fantastic shapes. Then he seemed like a child. Again, he would talk about the world like an old man rich in experience. But when he seated himself at the piano, one had to yield to an overmastering charm. The chords struck by his hands produced such sweet sounds, such happy ones that the soul would expand with joy; but, suddenly his mood would change, and the piano would groan under his touch like a sobbing voice, while the heart was moved, and the eyes filled with tears on hearing him. That was not all. When least expected, a thundering noise, deep and profound, would sound from the piano-case, and there could be heard, now from afar, then nearer, notes which made one tremble, and sounds which terrified. It seemed as though the trembling chords spoke in a language unknown to other souls.

Adrian Baker may appear to the nurse like Satan himself, or to the father like a man possessed with an evil spirit, or at least like an extraordinary being who possesses the diabolical secret of some magic philter. Bertha's father has heard about mysterious currents—subtle forces which attract or repel—of masterful wills, of magnetic forces, and, although he has never paid much heed to such things, he thinks of them continually, since he feels himself under the singular spell of Adrian's presence. So he is preoccupied, and it fairly becomes a monomania.

Two years previous to the time of which we write, one day a public conveyance galloped up to the principal hotel in the city, and the coachman's haste showed either the rank or the impatience of the traveler.

Adrian Baker, for it was he, alighted. He was wrapped in a traveling cloak lined with rich furs. The alacrity with which all the attendants rushed forward to receive him showed that they had discovered a rich mine of fees in the newcomer. The coachman took his leave, with cap in hand, and on turning his back, looked at the others and winked, while he showed them a gold coin. The traveler's trunk was immediately carried up to his apartments. Seven cities disputed the honor of being Homer's birthplace; seven attendants disputed the honor of carrying Adrian Baker's baggage. He seemed like a king entering his palace.

For a few days after, he would go out on foot, and roam all over the city to see the most notable sights. Afterwards, he would drive all over the place, and visit the most picturesque spots in that vicinity.

He soon found friends who admired his eccentricities, his talent, and his wealth, so he became a lion. To become his friend was an honor they sought for, while the women tried to win his heart; but he kept it sealed to intimacy or love.

So all they knew about him was that he was young, rich, and had traveled over half the globe. They thought he was either English, German or American, first, because he was fair; and second, because, though he spoke Spanish well, he had a slight foreign accent.

He wearied of living at the hotel, so he bought a large mansion, and took up his abode there in princely style. It was a palace, and so situated that one side faced Bertha's father's house.

So we know now, that the "Evil One" was none other than the neighbor opposite.

One night, when he returned from his customary visit to Bertha, he entered his dwelling, crossed the vestibule, and shut himself up in his room. Soon after the doors were closed, the lights put out, and profound silence reigned in the house.

But Adrian was not asleep. In his room, lighted by a dim lamp, his elbows resting on the table, his face hidden in his hands, he seemed lost in thought, not very pleasant, for he looked as though a storm were brewing. He struck his hand on the table, and exclaimed:

"Cursed wealth!"

"Odious wisdom!"

"Cruel experience!"

Then he paced up and down the room, crying:

"Faith of faith! doubts kill me!" Then he shook his head, and uttered a terrible peal of laughter. "Well," he added, "the ordeal is terrible. I must go down into the grave. But I will do so, and consult the oracle of Death about the mysteries of Life."

At that moment, the crystal tube which shaded the lamp burst into fragments; the flame grew darker, taking a reddish hue, and giving out a cloud of black smoke, which filled the room with shadows that crept along the wall, on the ceiling, or across the floor. It seemed as though the furniture was about to walk, the roof to fall, and the walls to walk off. In the midst of this diabolical dance of light and shade, the flame went out as though blown by an invisible current, and everything was quiet in the midst of the darkness.

Something must have happened.

In Bertha's house, the nurse could not keep still a moment. She came and went like one in a dream. It seemed like a nervous fit which duplicated her energy. But she felt happy. Heavens! sometimes our poor human nature expresses joys and sorrows by the same signs, and people cry for joy, as well as grief.

Suddenly the bell sounded, and then two slow knocks, which affected Juana like an electric shock. She rushed towards the landing and pulled the bell-rope with a jerk, and there was Bertha's father leaning on his cane, looking pale and feeble. He lifted his eyes and saw the nurse, who, from the upper landing, was wildly gesticulating. He could not understand her motions, so he shrugged his shoulders.

She folded her arms and put on an expression which clearly said, "How stupid you are."

So the poor man shrunk under her scornful attitude, and slowly mounted the stairs. She seized his hand, led him to his room, and after assuring herself that nobody was looking, whispered:

"He is going away."

"He is going away!" repeated Bertha's father, with a heavy sigh.

"Yes, we shall be free!" said Juana.

"True!" said the poor man, shaking his head incredulously. Then he resumed—"Where is he going to?"

"To the infernal regions!" replied Juana. "That is plain. He says that he is going to look out for some property at the end of the world. It is very sudden."

The old man sighed deeply, and Juana looked at him with amazement, saying:

"Anybody would think I had given you bad news. Has that man bewitched you?"

"Yes," answered he, "because if he goes, he will not go alone. He will take Bertha, and then what will become of me?"

"Not at all; he is going alone."

"Worse and worse, for then, what will become of Bertha?" said her father.

"What will become of her? Smoke and ashes! 'If I once ruin you, I no longer see you. Absence makes the heart grow fonder'—of somebody else. Such is the world," said Juana. "Bertha knows it, she said so herself, and is cool and calm as possible. She will not have to take a cordial to bear up under the parting."

Just then she turned her head and could scarcely repress a cry on seeing Adrian, who had just come in. It was he, paler than ever, and dressed in a handsome traveling suit. His eyes sparkled with a strange light, and a vague, sorrowful smile flitted across his lips. He begged pardon for the surprise he had given them, saying that unforeseen wants obliged him to make a hurried journey to America, but he would only be away a short time and would return.

"I go, but I leave my heart here, so I will come back after it," he said to Bertha's father.

Then he embraced him so affectionately that the old man was touched, while Juana felt tears come to her eyes. Adrian put his hand on her shoulder, and she felt it tremble while he said:

"Such is the world, eh? Well, we'll see."

Bertha came out to meet him, and her hand sought his, and both hands clasped each other in a close, warm pressure, while she asked with a trembling voice:

"Will you come back soon?"

"Very soon," he replied.

"When?" said she.

"Soon," replied Adrian. "If you wait for me, your own heart will tell you of my coming."

"I will wait for you forever," said Bertha, with a choking voice, but without a tear in her eyes.

Their joined hands unclasped.

Adrian rushed downstairs, and a few moments afterwards the sound of a coach driving off was heard. Bertha looked at her father with a sweet smile, and then went away to shut herself up in her room.

When the noise of the carriage had died away like distant thunder, the housekeeper made the sign of the cross on her breast, and said:

"He has gone. We can breathe freely now."

Apparently Juana was well acquainted with a woman's heart, for it was now three months since Adrian had left, and she had not yet seen a tear in Bertha's eyes. Bertha appeared indifferent. During that time she had received a letter, in which he said what lovers usually say, but it was a simple, tender, passionate letter, and did not seem as though it were written from the other side of the ocean, so far away—there where the deepest and most ardent love is sometimes wrecked. She answered at once, and the letter crossed the tempestuous ocean, full of loving promises and hope.

It is true that Bertha kept Adrian's letter carefully treasured as though it

were a relic. It is true that she passed many hours at the piano, playing his favorite airs, but apart from this her life ran the usual course. She had a good appetite, and slumbered with the tranquil repose of a happy heart. She took pleasure in beautifying herself also. Some sharp edges of her character were rounded off, but she was as bright as usual. She never mentioned Adrian's name.

Her father and nurse really thought that she had forgotten him. His dwelling was kept up in the usual style by his retinue of servants, as though they expected their master might return at any moment.

Spring had come, and nature was rejuvenated with all the richness she usually displays in southern countries—and this place was in the South. Bertha participated in the sweet awakening of nature, and her beauty acquired new charms. It seemed as though youth had made one supreme effort, in adding the last touch to her beauty.

One day Adrian's dwelling seemed full of grief. The blinds were closed, and the attendants were dressed in mourning, for their master was dead. He had died of pneumonia in New York, and the news had come in a letter written by his banker.

Bertha's father and her nurse looked at each other in amazement, hardly able to believe that that singular being had succumbed to death, like any other ordinary mortal, while each repeated:

"He is dead!"

Bertha, pale as death, surprised them, and said in a sepulchral tone:

"Yes, he is dead, but he lives in my heart."

Then turning away, she retreated to her room and sat down by the balcony, from which she could see the terrace of the palace. The flowers, moved by the soft air, leaned towards Bertha, as though saluting her sadly. She contemplated them with tears in her eyes, while a deep pallor overspread her face, and her lips trembled, revealing her bitter anguish.

Suddenly her gaze was attracted to a white butterfly which floated in the air. She followed it with abstracted gaze, and, as though attracted by her glances, it flew around in fanciful circles, left the terrace and came towards the balcony, entering her room. Bertha stretched out her hand to seize it, but it escaped like a flash, and commenced to fly around above her head, moving a current of air encircling her brow like a nimbus, and its wings flaming like the first beams of the dawn. Then it floated away over the flowers and was lost to sight, as though it had faded into air. She looked for it eagerly, but in vain. Then she folded her hands, while great tears rolled down her cheeks.

On the following day the housekeeper entered her room, and saw, at the head of the bed, a shadow which stood out from the wall. The shape took the form of a human head. It was Adrian's—his pallid brow, his irresistible glance and sweet smile. She stopped, horrified, and rushed out of the room.

Adrian's death caused terrible ravages in Bertha's appearance. She did not annoy by sighing and weeping, she concealed her grief, while it fed on her heart. One might have thought she had forgotten it, but the shadow of a deep grief could be seen in her eyes,

and the pallor of her cheeks spread a funereal oil over her beauty. Her faint voice revealed the profound loneliness of her loving heart. She would sometimes smile sweetly at her father, but grief was wasting her beauty.

Her father and nurse were overwhelmed with despair, and vainly tried to avert the evil, and hoped that time would assuage her grief. But time went on, and Adrian's memory, like a slow poison, was eating her life away.

She was surrounded with all the enjoyments of life; she was courted by the most eligible men in the city, who vainly sought to win her hand and fortune, but she was inaccessible to all. None could make her forget.

Science and medicine were alike useless. Her nurse thought that Adrian had bewitched her, and had poured a magic philter into her blood; for the strongest love yields to absence or death.

Finally her father concluded to try the charms of Nature. Perhaps the beauty of the country might revive her spirits, the poetry of nature awaken in her heart new feelings and new hopes. Why not? Bertha's father possessed a country seat at a short distance from the city, and its red roof loomed above the surrounding trees. It was a very picturesque spot. On the right were the mountains, the plains on the left, and the seat in front, extending so far it seemed to blend with the horizon. The ruins of a monastery were nearby.

Bertha did not refuse to go, for she no longer cared whether she lived in the city or in the country. She insisted on taking her piano, which she regarded as a dear companion. She arranged her room herself. At the head of her bed she placed a life-size photograph of Adrian, which she had shaded with her own hands. And, as they had so little room in the house, she had her piano put in a pavilion in the garden, which was covered with honeysuckle and vines. In this pavilion Bertha passed several hours every day; and the birds would follow her in there, joining their merry caroling to the sad notes of the piano. But their joyousness did not suffice to lighten Bertha's heart. She could not forget Adrian. That name, which her lips never pronounced, was written everywhere. On the walls, on the trunks of the trees, even on the vines of the pavilion, and in its entwined branches, she could see—Adrian!

During the morning hours Bertha's face would light up, and her cheeks would flush, but towards nightfall, she would droop as though the sun of her life were setting, and would sit at the window, looking silently at the clouds for hours.

One evening Juana was with her. A sudden breeze floated over Bertha's head, and something made a rapid circle in the air like a flash, and then disappeared.

"Did you see it, Juana?" cried Bertha.

"Yes," answered the nurse. "It was a white butterfly which tried to perch on your head."

"Well!" said Bertha.

"White butterflies are good omens, and bring good news," said Juana.

"Oh!" cried Bertha, clasping her hands, "that's my white butterfly, and Adrian is coming after me. That is what it came to tell me; and I am waiting for him!"

The nurse looked at her with amazement. The reflection of the setting sun lighted up the sick girl's face, and her nurse could scarcely stand her bright, fixed gaze.

"Oh, my Lord, she is crazy!" she cried.

The nurse was half wild with the idea that Bertha was insane. She hid herself and burst out crying. She dared not tell Bertha's father, but she was more and more convinced of it. At night she would get up, and go to the bedside to watch her while she slept. Nothing in Bertha's demeanor indicated insanity, except her persistence in saying that Adrian was coming back to her, so the poor nurse was nearly frantic with anxiety, and her mind full of forebodings.

One night when she was vainly trying to fall asleep Juana heard a sound of music. She jumped out of bed, crying, "Bertha, Bertha!" But no one answered. She hurriedly dressed herself in the dark, saying:

"Can Bertha be alone in the pavilion at this hour of the night! Oh, my dear child. She must be insane."

She left the room, and found her way to Bertha's apartment. She looked at her bed and it was empty. She felt a current of cold, damp air, and saw that the window was wide open and Bertha was leaning against it, looking out into the darkness.

The nurse endeavored to cry out, but her voice was strangled in her throat. So it was not Bertha who had broken the silence of the night by touching those strange chords, which could yet be so distinctly heard from the piano in the pavilion. What unknown hand had produced that sweet, melodious strain? It seemed as though the chords spoke a language unknown to any but the souls from another world.

Just then Bertha saw the terrified nurse. Taking her hand, she said:

"You see, you hear it! It is Adrian, come to take me away. The white butterfly did not deceive me."

The nurse passed her hand over her forehead and rubbed her eyes.

"I knew he would come, and I have been expecting him every day," said Bertha.

The nurse breathed hard.

"Do you hear it? Do you hear those sighs which escape from the notes? He is calling me, and we must go to him—Come."

So saying she took the light, while Juana followed like her shadow. They entered the garden, and went towards the pavilion. The dim rays of the lamp cast a fantastic light around her, which made the shadows still thicker. The nurse followed, as if a stronger power than fear impelled her along. At the pavilion, Bertha called in a sweet tone:

"Adrian! Adrian!"

But nobody answered. Then she entered, while Juana clutched her skirts. The piano was open, but hushed.

"Nobody is here!" sighed Bertha.

"Nobody," said Juana, opening her eyes very wide.

The pavilion was deserted. Bertha's piano must have been endowed with the wonderful faculty of producing sounds without any human touch; masterly sounds which thrilled the soul with emotion.

The next night the serenade is repeated and the whole family are aroused, and rush to the pavilion. But

then the music stops, and they find nobody there. Whatever Bertha plays in the morning is repeated at night. They dread the coming darkness, for the ghostly music is continued every night. But Bertha enjoys it, for it seems to her the evidence of Adrian's presence.

One afternoon she persuaded her father and Juana to accompany her to the old monastery, the ruins of which were not far from the house. When they arrived there, Bertha entered the chapel, passing under the arches, which seemed ready to fall, and came out into what must have been the center of the monastery, for the ruins indicated that it must have been the cloister.

Bertha sat down on a stone, a happy look on her face, in spite of the desolation around her. Her father and her nurse drew near, with fear stamped on their faces, for they heard footsteps behind them, and had seen a shadow creep in. Bertha smiled, as Juana expressed her fears, saying:

"So you saw a shadow. Well, what harm can it do? It must be the footsteps of Adrian you heard, and his shadow, coming after me. Well, don't you know I carry him in my heart—that I am waiting for him?"

Adrian's name made her father and the nurse shudder, and they urged her to return home, but Bertha drew her father towards her and said affectionately:

"Dear father, I am not mad. Adrian promised to return, and he will surely do so. I am waiting for him now. Why should you think it strange? I know that I pain you, and I don't want to do so. I have prayed to God to banish Adrian's image from my heart, and his memory from my mind, but He who sees and knows all refuses. Why? Only He knows."

Her father's eyes filled with tears, and the nurse hid her face to conceal the sobs which shook her frame. Bertha added:

"It is late, and I am tired, but let us stay here a little longer."

They kept silent. Suddenly they looked at one another anxiously. They had heard a sigh which seemed breathed from the ruins. Could it have been a current of air sweeping against the edges of the wall?

Bertha stood up, and raising her voice, called:

"Adrian, Adrian!"

Before the sound of her voice died, another responded:

"Bertha, Bertha!"

The sun had set, and the darkness enveloped the ruins; while from the end of the cloister a shadow came forth. It slowly advanced towards Bertha, crying:

"It is I. It is I!"

"Adrian!" she cried with outstretched arms.

Juana gave a fearful cry, and clutched at Bertha's dress, and her father tried to arise, but fell back on his knees beside his daughter.

It was not possible to doubt the evidence of their senses. There was Adrian, his pallid brow, his golden hair. No phantom, but real flesh and blood.

Then he advanced still nearer, and pressing Bertha's hand, while his eyes gleamed with triumph, he said:

"It is I! I am not a ghost from the grave. Pardon me, I have made you suffer a terrible ordeal; but the doubt I suffered was still more terrible."

Bertha felt her strength give way.

"Yes," he continued, "the world had filled my mind with doubt, and I wanted to penetrate into the depths of your soul. It has withstood absence, and even death. Your love for me was not a fleeting fancy, and you did not deceive yourself when you vowed to love me forever. I went away to watch you. I wished to die, to understand you. I have followed you everywhere. I have not left you for a moment. Sweet Bertha, you waited for me in life, and waited for me in death. If you wait for me, I told you, your own heart will announce to you my coming. I am here. I felt an immense tenderness towards you, and my heart was torn with doubt. Had my wealth dazzled you? Pardon me, darkness had chilled all faith in my heart, and I was suspicious of everybody. I even doubted your love."

Bertha folded her hands, and gazing to heaven, said:

"How cruel, how unjust you were!"

"Yes," cried Adrian. "Cruel indeed. But you have given new life to my soul, you have made me live again in your dear love."

"Alas!" cried Bertha, pressing her hand to her heart; "it may be too late!" Then turning to her nurse she added: "I am very cold. Take me back to the house."

Leaning on Adrian's arm she returned to the house, while her father and her nurse followed them silently.

The poor man had understood what was coming, but the nurse remained in ignorance then. That night there was a terrible scene of agitation. A physician was hastily summoned. The shock of this strange meeting had been too much for Bertha. She was dying.

Adrian was wild with despair. Her father was overcome with grief, and the nurse hid herself to weep. At daybreak they had to send to the city again. The physician of the body had exhausted his art; they had now to call in the physician of the soul.

At daybreak a priest alighted at the door. The dying girl received him with gladness, and a little while after all was over.

The body was placed on a funeral couch in the middle of the room, lighted by six torches, which shed a sad reflection over the scene. The open window let in the morning air; and the autumn breeze, stripping the dry leaves from the trees, threw them on Bertha's inanimate body, as if Death would pay homage to the dead. Attracted by the torches, a white butterfly came in and fluttered around the head of the dead girl.

The poor father was watching by her side, his head bowed with the weight of a deep grief. The nurse was there also, sobbing as if her heart would break.

Adrian stood by the funeral couch, with his eyes hard and brilliant, pale, convulsed, dumb, and terrible! while the priest with clasped hands, and his head bowed on his chest, murmured the prayers for the dead.

Heaving a sigh from the depths of his soul, Adrian said with a hoarse voice:

"And I killed her!"

"Alas, yes," said the priest. "It was divine retribution, for doubt destroys."

The Guarded Senorita

As two young law-students, natives of La Mancha, were one day passing along the streets of Salamanca, they happened to see over the window of a certain shopkeeper, a rich Persian blind, drawn closely down,—a novelty which attracted their attention. Fond of adventure, and more deeply read in the noble science of attack and defence, than the laws of Bartolus or Baldus, they felt a strong curiosity to know why the articles the shop contained were kept, being marked on sale, so studiously out of view. Why not exhibited in the window as well as at the door? To remove their perplexity, they proceeded to make inquiries—not at the shop, but at one some little distance off, where they observed a babbling old shopkeeper, busily serving his neighbours, and, at the same time, retailing the latest news and scandal of the place. In answer to their questions, he ran on with the same volubility. "My young gentlemen, you are very inquisitive; but if you must know, there is a foreign lady now resides in that house, at least half a saint, a very pattern of self-denial and austerity, and I wish you were under her direction. She has with her, also, a young lady of extraordinary fine appearance and great spirit, who is said to be her niece. She never goes out without an old squire, and two old duennas, young gentlemen; and, as I think, they are a family from Granada, rich, proud, and fond of retirement. At least, I have not seen a single soul in our city (and I have watched them well) once pay them a visit. Nor can I, for the life of me, learn from what place they last came hither. But what I do know is, that the young lady is very handsome and very respectable, to all appearance; and from the style of living and high bearing of the aunt, they belong to none of the common sort, of that I am sure."

From this account, pronounced with no little emphasis and authority, by the garrulous old gentleman, the students became more eager than ever to follow up their adventure. Familiar as they were with the topographical position of the good citizens, the names of the different families and dwellings, and all the flying reports of the day, they were still in the dark as to the real quality of the fair strangers, and their connections in the University. By dint of industry and perseverance, however, they hoped soon to clear up their doubts, and the first thing they ascertained was, that, though past the hour of noon, the door of the mansion was still closed, and there seemed no admittance, even upon business. From this they naturally inferred that, if no tradesmen were admitted, the family could not well take their meals at home; and that if, like other mortals, they eat at all, they must soon make their appearance on their way to dinner.

In this conjecture they were not deceived, for shortly they saw a staid and reverend looking lady issue from the dwelling, arrayed all in white, with an immense surplice, wider than a Portuguese canon's, extending over her head, close bound round her temples, and

leaving only just space enough for her to breathe. Her fan was in her hand, and a huge rosary with innumerable beads and bells about her neck—so large indeed, that, like those of Santinuflo, they reached down to her waist. Her mantle was of fine silk trimmed with furs; her gloves of the whitest and newest, without a fold; and she had a walking-stick, or rather an Indian cane, delicately wrought and tipped with silver. A venerable old squire, who seemed to have belonged to the times of Count Fernan Gonzales, escorted his honoured mistress on the left hand. He was dressed in a large wide coat of velvet stuff, without any trimming—ancient scarlet breeches—moorish hose—a cloak trimmed with bands—and a cap of strong netted wool, which produced rather a quizzical effect, but which he wore because he was subject to cold and a dizziness in his upper story; add to which a large shoulder-belt and an old Navarrese sword.

These respectable-looking personages were preceded by another of very different exterior; namely, the lady's niece, apparently about eighteen, graceful in her deportment, and of a grave but gracious aspect. Her countenance was rather of the oval—beautiful and intelligent; her eyes were large and black as jet, not without a certain expression of tenderness and languor; arched and finely marked eyebrows, long dark eyelashes, and on her cheeks a delicate glow of carnation. Her tresses, of a bright auburn, flowed in graceful curls round brows of snowy whiteness, combined with a fine delicate complexion, etc.; and she had on a sarsnett mantle; a bodice of Flemish stuff; her sandals were of black velvet, enriched with gilt fastenings and silver fringe; fine scented gloves, not only fragrant with common essence, but with the richest amber.

Though her demeanour was grave, her step was light and easy: in each particular she appeared to advantage, and in her *tout ensemble* still more attractive. In the eyes of the young scholars she appeared little less than a goddess, and, with half the dazzling charms she boasted, would have rivetted her fetters on the hearts of older and more experienced admirers. As it was, they were completely taken by surprise—astonished, stupefied, overwhelmed, and enchanted. They stood gazing at so much elegance and beauty as if their wits had left them; it being one of the prerogatives of beauty, like the fascination of the serpent, first to deprive its victims of their senses, and then to devour them.

Behind this paragon of perfection walked two ugly old duennas (like maids of honour,) arrayed, if we only allow for their sex, much in the obsolete manner of their knight companion, the ancient squire.

With this formal and imposing escort, the venerable chaperon at length arrived at the house,—the good squire took his station at the door, and the whole party made their entrée. As they passed in, the young students doffed their caps with extraordinary alacrity and politeness; displaying in their air and manner, as much modesty and respect as they could muster for the occasion.

The ladies, however, took no notice of them, shutting themselves in, and the young gentlemen out: who were

left quite pensive and half in love, standing in the middle of the street. From this want of courtesy they ingeniously came to the conclusion, that these fair disturbers of their peace had not come to Salamanca for the purpose of studying the laws of politeness, but studying how to break them. In spite, however, of their ingratitude, they agreed to return good for evil, and to treat them on the following night to a little concert of music, in the form of a serenade,—for this is the first and only service which poor students have it in their power to offer at the windows of her who may have smitten them.

Seeking some solace, however, for their disappointment just at present, they repaired to a restaurateur's; and having partaken of what little they could get, they next betook themselves to the chambers of some of their friends. There they made a collection of all the instruments of musical torture they could find; such as old wire-worn guitars, broken violins, lutes, flutes, and castanets; for each of which they provided suitable performers, who had at least one eye, an arm, and a leg among them. Not content, however, with this, being determined to get everything up in the most original style, they sent a deputation to a poet, with a request that he would forthwith compose a sonnet. This sonnet was to be written for, and precisely upon, the name of *Esperanza;* such being the Christian appellation of the hope of their lives and loves; and it was to be sung aloud on that very same night. The poet undertook the serious charge; and in no little while, by dint of biting his lips and nails, and rubbing his forehead, he manufactured a sonnet, weaving with his wits just as an operative would weave a piece of cloth.

This he handed to the young lovers; they approved it, and took the author along with them to repeat it to the musicians as they sung it, there being no time to commit it to memory.

Meantime the eventful night approached—and at the due hour, there assembled for the solemn festival, nine knights of the cleaver, four vocal performers with their guitars, one psaltery, one harper, one fiddler, twelve bell-ringers, thirty shield-sounders, and numerous other practitioners, divided into several companies; all, however, better skilled in the music of the knife and fork than in any other instrument. In full concert they struck up, on entering the street, and a fresh peal on arriving at the lady's house; the last of which made so hideous a din as to rouse all within hearing from their quiet slumbers, and bring them to their windows half dead with wonder and alarm. This was continued some time just under the lady's window, till the general concert ceased, to give room for the harp and the recital of the poet's sonnet. This was sung by one of those musicians who never wait to be invoked; nor was the poet less on the alert as prompter on the occasion. It was given with extreme sweetness and harmony of voice, and quite accorded with the rest of the performance.

Hardly had the recitation of this wonderful production ceased, when a cunning rogue, among the audience, turning to one of his companions, exclaimed in a loud, clear voice, "I vow to heaven I never heard a viler song worse sung, in all my born days! Did

you note well the harmony of the lines, and that exquisite adaptation of the lady's name; that fine invocation to Cupid, and the pretty mention of the age of the adored object,—the contrast then between the giant and the dwarf —the malediction—the imprecation— the sonorous march of the whole poem. I vow to God, that if I had the pleasure of knowing the author, I would willingly, to-morrow morning, send him a dozen pork sausages, for I have this very day received some from the country." At the word sausages, the spectators were convinced that the person who had just pronounced the encomium, meant it in ridicule; and they were not mistaken; for they afterwards learnt that he came from a place famous for its practical jokers, which stamped him in the opinion of the bystanders for a great critic, well qualified to pass judgment upon poets, as his witty analysis of this precious morsel had shewn.

Notwithstanding all their endeavours, the windows of the house they were serenading seemed the only ones that remained closed, a circumstance at which our young adventurers were not a little disappointed. Still, however, they persevered; the guitars were again heard, accompanied by three voices, in a romantic ballad chosen for the occasion. The musicians had not proceeded far, before they heard a window opened, and one of the duennas whom they had before seen, made her appearance. In a whining hypocritical tone, she addressed the serenaders: "Gentlemen, my mistress, the Lady Claudia di Astudillo y Quinones, requests that you will instantly repair to some other quarter, and not bring down scandal upon this respectable neighbourhood by such violent uproar; more particularly as there is now at her house a young lady, her niece, my young mistress, Lady Esperanza di Torralva Meneses y Pachico. It is very improper, therefore, to create such a disturbance among people of their quality. You must have recourse to other means, of a more gentlemanly kind, if you expect to meet with a favourable reception."

On hearing these words, one of the young gallants quickly retorted, "Do me the favour, most venerable mistress, to request your honoured Lady Donna Esperanza, to gladden our eyes by presenting herself at the window. I wish to say a few words, which may prove of the greatest consequence." "Oh, shocking!" exclaimed the duenna, "is it the Lady Esperanza you mean? You must know, my good Sir, she is not thus lightly to be spoken of,—she is a most honourable, exemplary, discreet, modest young person, and would not comply with such an extravagant request, though you were to offer her all the pearls of the Indies."

During this colloquy with the ancient duenna, there came a number of people from the next street; and the musicians, thinking the alguazils were at hand, sounded a retreat, placing the baggage of the company in the centre; they then struck up some martial sounds with the help of their shields, in the hope that the captain would hardly like to accompany them with the sword dance, as is the custom at the holy feast of San Fernando at Seville; but would prefer passing on quietly to risking a defeat in the presence of his emissaries.

They therefore stood their ground, for the purpose of completing their night's adventure; but one of the two masters of the revels refused to give them any more music, unless the young lady would consent to appear at the window. But not even the old duenna again honoured them with her presence there, notwithstanding their repeated solicitations; a species of slight which threw the whole company into a rage, and almost incited them to make an attack upon the Persian blinds, and bring their fair foes to terms. Mortified as they were, they still continued their serenade, and at length took their leave with such a volley of discordant sounds, as to make the very houses shake with their hideous din.

It was near dawn before the honourable company broke up, to the extreme annoyance and disappointment of the students, at the little effect their musical treat seemed to have produced. Almost at their wits end, they at last hit upon the expedient of referring their difficulties to the judgment of a certain cavalier, in whom they thought they could confide. He was one of that high spirited class termed in Salamanca *los generosos.*

He was young, rich, and extravagant, fond of music, gallant, and a great admirer of bold adventures; in short, the right sort of advocate in a cause like theirs. To him they recounted very minutely their prodigious exertions and their ill-success; the extreme beauty, grace, and attractions of the young, and the imposing and splendid deportment of the old lady; ending with the small hope they had of ever becoming better acquainted with them. Music, it was found, boasted no charm for them, "charmed they ever so wisely;" nay, they had been accused of bringing scandal upon the whole neighbourhood.

Now their friend, the cavalier, being one who never blinked danger, began to reassure them, and promised that he would soon bring their uncourteous foes to conditions, COUTE QUI COUTE; and that, as he was himself armed against the keenest shafts of the little archer-god, he would gladly undertake the conquest of this proud beauty on their account.

Accordingly, that very day he dispatched a handsome and substantial present to the lady-aunt, with his best services; at the same time offering all he was worth—life, his person, his goods and chattels, and—his compliments. Such an offer not occurring every day, the elder duenna took on her the part of the Lady Claudia, and, in her mistress's name, was curious to hear from the page something of the rank, fortune, and qualifications of his master. She inquired especially as to his connections, his engagements, and the nature of his pursuits, just as if she were going to take him for a son-in-law. The page told her every thing he knew, and the pretended aunt seemed tolerably well satisfied with his story.

It was not long ere she went, in person, in her mistress's name, as the old duenna, with an answer to the young cavalier, so full and precise, that it resembled an embassy rather than a letter of thanks. The duenna arrived, and proceeded to open the negotiation; she was received by the cavalier with great courtesy. He bade her be seated in a chair near his own; he took off her cloak with his own hands, and handed her a fine embroidered handkerchief to

wipe the perspiration from her brow, for she seemed a little fatigued with her walk. He did more; and before permitting her to say a single word on the nature of her errand, he ordered sweet-meats and other delicacies to be set before her, and helped her to them himself. He then poured out two glasses of exquisitely flavoured wine, one for her and one for himself. In short, so delicate and flattering were his attentions, that the venerable guardian of youthful virtue could not have received more genuine pleasure if she had been made a saint upon the spot.

She now opened the object of her embassy, with the most choice, demure, and hypocritical set of phrases she could command; though ending with a most flat falsehood to the following purport. "She was commissioned," she said, "by her excellent young mistress, Donna Esperanza di Torralva Meneses y Pachico, to present to his excellency her best compliments and thanks. That his excellency might depend, that, though a lady of the strictest virtue, Donna Esperanza would never refuse to receive so excellent and accomplished a gentleman upon an honourable footing, whenever he were inclined to honour her aunt's house with his presence." The cavalier replied, "that he had the most perfect faith in all he had heard respecting the surpassing beauty, virtue, and accomplishments of her young mistress, qualities which made him only the more eager to enjoy the honour of an interview."

After an infinite variety of reservations and circumlocutions, this proposal was acceded to by the good duenna, who assured him there could be no possible objection on the part of either of the ladies; an assertion, than which, however, nothing could be farther from the truth. In short, desirous of discharging her duennal duty in the strictest manner, and not content with intercepting the cavalier's presents, and personating Donna Claudia, the wily old lady resolved to turn the affair to still further account. She ended the interview, therefore, with assuring him that she would, that very evening, introduce him to the ladies; and first, to the beautiful Esperanza, before her aunt should be informed of his arrival.

Delighted with his success, the young cavalier dismissed his obliging guest with every expression of esteem, and with the highest compliments to her fair mistress; at the same time putting a purse into the old duenna's hand, enough to purchase a whole wardrobe of fine clothes. "Simple young man," muttered the cunning old lady, as she left the house; "he thinks it is all finely managed now; but I must touch a little more of his money; he has certainly more than he knows what to do with. It is all right; he shall be welcome to my lady's house, truly; but how will he go out again, I wonder. The officers will see him home, I dare say, but not till after he has paid me well again for being admitted; and my young lady has made me a present of some handsome gowns for introducing so pretty a young gentleman; and her foolish old aunt rewarded me well for discovering the secret."

Meantime, the young cavalier was impatiently expecting the appointed hour; and as there is none but sooner or later must arrive, he then took his hat and cloak, and proceeded where the ancient duenna was expecting him.

On his arrival she nodded to him out of a window, and having caught his eye, she threw him the empty purse he had presented her with, well filled in the morning. Don Felix was at no loss to take the hint, and on approaching the door, he found it only a little open, and the claws of the old beldame ready to clutch the offered bait before she granted him admittance. It was then opened wide, and she conducted him in silence up stairs, and through a suite of rooms into an elegant little boudoir, where she concealed him behind a Persian screen, in a very skilful and cautious manner. She bade him remain quite still; her young lady, Esperanza, was informed of his arrival, and from HER favourable representations of his high rank, fortune, and accomplishments, she was prepared to give him an interview, even without consulting her aunt. Then giving her hand as a token of her fidelity, she left Don Felix couched behind the screen, in anxious expectation of the result.

Meanwhile, the artful old wretch, under the strictest promise of secresy, and a handsome present of new gowns, had communicated to the aunt the important intelligence of the discovery of so unpleasant an affair, relating to the unsullied reputation and high character of her niece. She then whispered her mistress in the ear that she had actually discovered a man concealed in the house, and what was worse, by appointment with her young lady, as she had learnt from a note she had intercepted; but that she dared not disturb the intruder, as he appeared armed at all points. She therefore intreated her mistress to make no noise, lest he should perpetrate some deadly deed, before the officers of justice, to whom she had sent notice, should arrive to secure him. Now the whole of this statement was a new tissue of lies, as the old beldame intended to let the cavalier very quietly out, and had never yet ventured to acquaint her young lady with his presence at all. Having thus carried her point with the old lady, she declared that if she would promise to stay without disturbing herself in that room, she would go in search of Esperanza, and conduct her to her aunt immediately. This being agreed upon, the duenna proceeded to look for her young lady up stairs, and was not a little puzzled to find her seated in her boudoir, and Don Felix near her, with an expression of the utmost pleasure and surprise in his countenance. What had been his astonishment on Esperanza's entrance, to behold the beloved girl from whom he had been separated by her aunt's cruelty not many months before. What an extatic meeting for both; what a dilemma for the treacherous old duenna, should an explanation have already taken place! She had not been many weeks in the Lady Claudia's service, and she would certainly not be many more, if the lovers should be thus discovered together. What was to be done? Ere they could decide, her mistress's step was heard on the stairs; she was calling Esperanza, in those sharp, bitter tones to which her niece was too well accustomed, and she had already reached the ante-room ere Don Felix was safely ensconced behind the screen. Esperanza hastened towards her, and found her seated in an easy arm chair, in a sad flurry of mingled rage and alarm.

She cast ominous and perturbed glances towards the boudoir whence her

niece had just issued, and then looked out of the window, impatient for the arrival of the police. She did not venture to allude to the cause of her dismay; bidding her niece sit down, a portentous silence ensued. It was now late, the whole household, even their protector, the ancient squire, had retired to rest. Only the old duenna and her young mistress were wide awake, and the latter was particularly anxious for her aunt to retire. Though only nine, she declared she believed the clock had struck ten; she thought her aunt looked jaded and unwell; would she not like to go to bed? No reply; but dark, malignant glances, sufficiently attested what it would have been, had she dared to speak out. Though unable, however, to deal in particulars, she could not refrain from making some general observations which bore upon the case. In a low tone, therefore, she addressed her niece as follows:—"I have often enough warned you, Esperanza, not to lose sight of the exhortations I have invariably made it my business to give you. If you valued them as you ought, they would be of infinite use to you, as I fear time and experience will, ere long, sufficiently shew;" and here she again looked out of the window. "You must not flatter yourself we are now at Placentia, where you were born; nor yet at Zamora, where you were educated; no, nor at Toro, where you were first introduced. The people of those places are very different to what they are here; there is no scandal, no jealousies, no intriguing, my dear; and (in a still lower tone) no violence and uproar such as we heard in the street last night. Heaven protect us from all violent and deceitful men; from all house-breaking, robbery, and assassinations. Yes, I say, I wish we were well out of Salamanca! You ought to be aware in what a place you are; they call it the mother of sciences, but I think it is the mother of all mischief; yes, of every thing bad, not excepting some people whom I know; but I mention no names just now," she added, with a look of suppressed malice and vexation; "though I could if I pleased. But the time will come!" and she here muttered some low unintelligible threats about grates and convents. "We must leave this place, my dear; you perhaps don't know there are ten or twelve thousand students here; young, impudent, abandoned, lost, predestined, shameless, graceless, diabolical, and mischievous wretches, the scum of all parts of the world, and addicted to all evil courses, as I think we had pretty good proofs only last night. Though avaricious as misers, when they set their eyes upon a young woman, my dear, they can be extravagant enough. The Lord protect us from all such, I say! Jesu Maria save us from them all!"

During this bitter moral lecture, Esperanza kept her eyes fixed upon the floor, without speaking a word, and apparently quite resigned and obedient, though without producing its due effect upon her aunt. "Hold up your head, child, and leave off stirring the fire; hold up your head, and look me in the face, if you are not ashamed, and try to keep your eyes open, and attend to what I say. You require all the senses you have got, depend upon it, to make good use of my advice; I know you do." Esperanza here ventured to put in a word: "Pray, dear aunt, don't so fret yourself and me by troubling yourself

to say any more. I know all you would say, and my head aches shockingly—do spare yourself, or I think my head will split with pain." "It would be broken with something else, perhaps, if you had your deserts, young miss, to answer your affectionate aunt in such a way as that! To say nothing of what I know —yes, what I know, and what others shall know, when somebody comes;" and she glanced very significantly towards the door.

Of this edifying conversation Don Felix had partly the benefit, as it occurred so near his place of concealment. The old duenna, meantime, being desirous, after the discovery that had taken place, of ingratiating herself with the lovers, and finding there was no hope of Donna Claudia retiring to rest till the arrival of the police, thought it high time to bring the young cavalier out of his dilemma. It was her object to get him safe out of the house, and yet preserve the good opinion of her venerable mistress, who might wait, she thought, till doomsday for the police. As it was impossible to speak to Don Felix, she hit upon the following expedient to make him speak for himself, trusting to her own and her young lady's discretion for bringing him off safely. She took her snuff-box, and approaching his hiding-place very slyly, threw a good handful into his face, which taking almost immediate effect, he began to sneeze with such a tremendous noise, that he might be heard in the street. She then rushed, in apparent alarm, into the next room, crying out: "He is coming! he is here;—guns and pistols—pistols and guns—save yourselves, my dear ladies! Here, you go into this closet!" she pushed the old aunt into it, almost dead with fright, and closed the door. "You come with me," she continued to Esperanza, "and I will see you safe here." Saying which, she took the young lady with her, and joined her lover, who had already found his way down stairs.

Unluckily, however, to make the scene more complete, and to impose the better upon her old mistress, she opened the window, and began to call out, "Thieves! thieves! help! help!" though in as subdued a tone as possible. But at the very first cry, the corregidor, who happened to be walking close to the house, entered the door, followed by two of his myrmidons, just as Don Felix opened it to go out. They instantly pounced upon and secured him, before he had time either to explain or defend himself; and, spite of the entreaties of Esperanza and the duenna, he was borne away.

They followed, however, to represent the affair ot the chief alguazil; and they had gone only a little way when they were met by a strong party, headed by the identical two students, who came prepared for a fresh serenade, on the strength of their friend the cavalier's support and assistance. What was their surprise and dismay to behold him in such hands, and followed by the lovely Esperanza herself, the cause of all their anxiety and exertions. Love and honour at once fired their breasts, and their resolution was taken in a moment. Six friends, and an army of musicians, were behind them. Turning to them, out flew their own swords, as they called on them to draw in aid of honour and beauty, and rescue them from the hands of the vile alguazils. All united in the cry of rescue,—the musicians in the rear struck up the din of war; and a

hideous peal it was,—while the rest rushed on with as much haste and spirit as if they had been going to a rich banquet. The combat was not long doubtful; the emissaries of justice were overpowered by the mere weight of the crowd which bore upon them; and unable to stir either hand or foot, they were mingled in the thick of the engagement, pressed on all sides by halt, and maimed, and blind, and stunned with the din of battle from the rear.

While this continued, Don Felix and his fair companion had been the especial care of the students and their friends, by whom they had been early drawn off into a place of comparative safety. Here a curious scene took place:—after the first congratulations upon their victory, the two students took their friend Don Felix by the hand, expressing the deep gratitude they both felt for the eternal obligation he had conferred upon them, having so nobly redeemed his pledge of bringing the lady to terms, and placing her in their hands. The speaker then continued, that *he* having had the good fortune to bear her away in safety from the crowd, was justly entitled to the prize, which he hoped would not be disputed, as he was then ready to meet any rival. The other instantly accepted the challenge, declaring he would die sooner than consent to any such arrangement. The fair object of their strife looked at Don Felix, uttering exclamations of mingled terror and surprise, while the young cavalier, just as the students were proceeding to unsheath their weapons, burst into a fit of uncontrollable mirth. "Oh, miracle of love! mighty power of Cupid!" he exclaimed, "What is it I behold? Two such sworn friends to be thus metamorphosed in a moment! Going to fight; after I have so nobly achieved the undertaking! Never,—I am the man you must both run through the body, for verily I am about to forfeit my pledge. I too am in love with this lady; and with Heaven's permission and her own, to-morrow she will be mine—my own wedded wife; for, by Heaven! she returns no more to Aunt Claudia and her duennas. He then explained to the astonished students the story of their love; how, when, and wherefore they had wooed,—their separation and sufferings,—with the happy adventure that had crowned their hopes. Then imitating the language of the students, he took their hands, assuring them of his deep gratitude for the eternal obligation they had conferred upon him.

On the ensuing day, Esperanza gave her hand to Don Felix, and the venerable Aunt Claudia was released from her hiding-place, and all further anxiety on her niece's account.

Her Bosom's Secret

Dramas and romances present us with the most striking and glowing features of the human heart. They inflame the imagination, but the heart remains cold. The glow of feeling thus produced is seldom more than momentary, and less seldom applied to the purposes of common life. Perhaps at the very

moment when the unaffected benevolence of honest Puffs moves us almost to tears, we shall fly into a passion with a poor mendicant for knocking at our door. Who can assure us that this artificial existence in an ideal world does not tend to obliterate the principles of our existence in the real one? We here embrace, as it were, the two extreme points of morality, angelic and diabolical; while the middle, that of humanity, we leave untouched.

The present anecdote, relating to two Germans—I state the name of their country with a feeling of proud delight—may boast, at least, the indisputable merit of being true. I trust that it will produce a warmer feeling of sympathy and admiration than all the volumes of "Grandison" and "Pamela" put together.

Two brothers, Barons Von Wrmb, had both formed an attachment to a distinguished young lady of Wrthr, without a knowledge of each other's passion. It was equally strong in both, for in both it was a first passion. Unconscious of their mutual danger, each gave full rein to his affection, neither being aware of the dreadful truth that he had a beloved brother for his rival. They made an early declaration of their love, and had even proceeded to make further arrangements before an unexpected occurrence brought the secret to light.

The attachment of both had reached its highest pitch—that state of elevation both of the heart and imagination which has produced so many fatal consequences, and which renders even any idea of the sacrifice of the object of affection almost impossible. The lady, deeply sensible of their painful situation, hesitated how to decide; rather than inflict the agony of disappointed passion, and disturb the fraternal harmony subsisting between them, she generously referred the whole affair to themselves.

At length, having achieved an heroic conquest in this doubtful struggle between duty and passion, a conquest so easily decided upon by philosophical and moral writers in their closet, and so seldom practised in real life, the elder addressed his younger brother as follows:

"I am aware of your affection, strong as my own, alas! for the same lady of our love. I shall observe nothing in regard to priority of age. I wish you to remain here, while I go upon my travels, and do my utmost to forget her. Should I succeed, brother, she will then become thine, and may Heaven prosper your love! Should I, however, not succeed in my object, I doubt not you will act as I have done, and try what absence will effect."

His brother assented; and, bidding farewell, the elder instantly left Germany for Holland; but the image of the beloved girl followed him everywhere. Banished from the Paradise of his love, from the only happy and delightful scenes which he had once sought with her, to which his fancy always recurred, and in which only he seemed to breathe and live, the unhappy young man, like a plant torn from its native soil, from the warmer breezes and more invigorating beams of its eastern climes, pined and sickened in the new atmosphere to which he was consigned. He reached Amsterdam, but it was in despair; a violent fever attacked him, and he was pronounced in danger of his life. Still the picture of his lost

love haunted his delirious dreams; the only chance he had of recovery was in the possession of the lovely original herself. The physicians despaired of his recovery, until upon its being mentioned that he might yet live to behold her once more, from that moment he was gradually restored to health. Like a walking skeleton, the picture of utter wretchedness, he again appeared in his native place. He tottered across the threshold of his unforgotten girl, and again pressed his brother's hand. "You see, brother, I am returned. Alas! what my heart foreboded has come to pass; yet, as Heaven is my judge, I could do no more." He sank, almost lifeless, into the poor girl's arms.

The younger brother now became no less determined to try the effect of absence, and was ready prepared, within a few weeks, for his tour.

"Brother," said he, "you bore your grief as far as Holland. I will endeavour to banish myself yet farther. Do not, however, lead her to the altar until you hear from me. I will write. Our fraternal regard will admit of no stronger bond: our word is enough. Should I be more fortunate than you, in God's name let her be thine, and may He forever bless your union! Should I, however, return, then Heaven alone may decide between us two. Farewell! but keep this sealed packet: open it not until I shall be far away. I am going to Batavia." With these words he sprang into the chaise.

Half distracted, the two beings whom he had left gazed after him, and were little more to be envied than the banished man; for he had surpassed his brother, whom he had left, in greatness of soul. With equal power did love for the woman whom he had recovered, and regret for the brother whom he had lost, appear to strive for mastery in his breast. The noise of the carriage, as it died away in the distance, seemed to cleave his heart in twain. He recovered, however, with the utmost care and attention. The young lady—but no! that will be best shown by the result.

The sealed packet was opened. It contained a full and particular description of the whole of his German possessions, which he made over to his brother in case he found himself happy at Batavia. This heroic conqueror of himself shortly afterwards set sail in company with some Dutch merchants, and arrived in safety at Batavia. In the course of a few months afterwards his brother received from him the following lines:

"Here, where I perpetually return thanks to the Almighty Giver of all good—here I have found a new country, a new home, and call to mind, with all the stern pleasure of a martyr, our long and unbroken fraternal love. Fresh scenes, and fate itself, seem to have widened the current of my feelings; God hath granted me strength—yes, strength to offer up the highest sacrifice to our friendship. Thine is . . . . alas! here falls a tear—but it is the last . . . . I have triumphed!—thine let her be! Brother, I did not wish to take her when thou wert from us, because I feared she might not be happy in my arms. But should she ever have blessed me with the thought that we should indeed have been happy together—then, brother, I would impress it upon your soul. Do not forget how dearly she must be won by you, and al-

ways treat the dear angel with the same kindness and tenderness with which you now think of her. Treat her as the fondest, last, best legacy of a dear departed brother, whom thy arms will never more embrace. Do not write to me when you are celebrating your nuptials. My wounds are yet open and bleeding fresh. Write to me only when you are happy. My act in this will be surety for me, I trust, that God will not desert me in the world whither I have transferred myself."

After the receipt of this letter, the elder brother married the lady, and enjoyed one happy year of wedded love. The lady, at the end of that short period, died, and, in dying, she first entrusted to her husband the unhappy secret of her bosom—that she had loved his absent brother best.

Both these brothers are yet alive: the eldest, who is again married, resides upon his estates in Germany; the younger one remained at Batavia, where he is distinguished as a fortunate and very eminent character. He is said to have made a vow never to marry, and hitherto he has religiously kept it.

Transfixion

"I HAVE lived in Sophino, and busied myself with farming for a long while," began Aleckin, "ever since I finished my studies at the University. By bringing-up I am one who avoids work, and by inclination one fond of study, but when I arrived here on my estate there was a large debt on it; as my father owed part of it in consequence of all he had spent on my education, I decided I would not leave this place, and would work till such time as I had paid off the debt. This I resolved, and began my work here, not, I confess, without a certain distaste. The surrounding soil is unproductive, so to obviate incurring losses in farming, the only way would be to make use of serfs, or hirelings, which is almost one and the same thing, or else to conduct one's farming after the manner of the peasants, that is, to work on the fields oneself with all one's family. There is no middle course. But I did not indulge in such quillets. I did not leave one sod of earth unturned, I collected all the men and women from the neighboring villages, and frenziedly seethed the work on my estate. I myself plowed, and sowed, and mowed; was much bored thereby, and knitted my brows with contempt, like a country cat, who from hunger eats the cucumbers in the garden. My body ached all over, and I slept as I walked along. At first I thought I could quite easily combine this life of hard labor with my civilized habits; the only thing necessary, thought I, is to keep up certain outward appearances. I established myself up here in the best rooms, and after luncheon and dinner had coffee and liqueurs handed round, and every night when I got into bed I read *The Europe Messenger*. But our little priest, Father Ivan, came one day and at one sitting drank all my liqueurs; *The Europe Messenger* also found its way into his house, and, as

during the summer, especially when the hay was being cut, I had not time to get as far as my bed, but fell asleep in the shed, in a sleigh, or somewhere on the outskirts of the forest, where did the reading come in?

"By degrees I moved downstairs, I dined in the servants' kitchen, and of all my former luxury nothing remained but the servants, who had been in my father's service, and whom to dismiss would have been a great grief to me.

"Almost from the beginning I was elected Honorary Justice of the Peace. Every now and again it was incumbent on me to go to the town and take part in the sittings of the Tribunal and the Court of Assizes, which gave me a mild diversion. When one lives here two or three months without a change, especially in the winter, one begins finally to long for a black frock-coat. At the Court of Assizes there were men in frock-coats, uniforms, and dress-coats, jurists and people—all of whom having had a certain education, made someone to talk to. After sleeping in a sleigh and sitting in the kitchen, it is such a luxury to recline in an arm-chair, in clean clothes and thin boots, wearing a decorative chain!

"The town received me very cordially, and I made a number of friends. Of all my acquaintances the one I knew best and liked most was Luganovitch, the Vice-President of the Court of Assizes. You both know him; he is a most excellent fellow. Well, at the end of that celebrated incendiary case, when the inquiry had lasted for two days and we were worn out, Luganovitch looked at me and said:

"'Do you know what? Let's go to my house and dine.'

"This was very unexpected, as I only knew him slightly, and that officially, and had never before been to his house. I just went to my room for a moment to change my clothes, then went off to dinner. Here took place my first meeting with Anna Alexievna, Luganovitch's wife. She was then very young, about twenty-two, and six months later had her first baby. It is all over now, and I should find it difficult to define what exactly was so unusual about her, what it was that so attracted me in her, then, at that dinner, it was all so unmistakably clear. I saw a young, beautiful, good, intelligent, fascinating woman, such as I had never met before, and I felt so intimate with her at once, as if I had always known her, just as if I had seen those same features, those friendly intellectual eyes, ever since childhood in an album which lay on my mother's chest of drawers.

"Four Jews were incriminated in the incendiary case, and were found guilty —I thought quite without proof. I got in a great state about it at dinner, felt rather upset, and I don't remember now what I said, but Anna Alexievna shook her head, and said to her husband:

"'Dmitri, how was that?'

"Luganovitch was one of those worthy, simple-minded persons, who firmly hold to the belief that once a man has been convicted it means that he is guilty, and to express a doubt as to the justice of the sentence cannot be done, except in legal terms in the reports, but in no wise at dinner or in general conversation.

"'We set fire to nothing,' he said gently, 'and so we have not been tried nor put into prison.'

"Both the husband and the wife did

the utmost to make me eat and drink more. In a number of small ways, such as, for instance, the way they both made the coffee together, seemed to understand each other by a mere hint, I was able to conclude that they were very happy together, all was as it should be, and that they enjoyed having guests. After dinner they played duets on the piano; presently it got dark, and I went home.

"This was in the early spring; I spent the whole summer at Sophino without once leaving it, and I never had time even to think of the town, but the remembrance of a tall, fair woman remained with me all the day long. I did not think of her, but something very like a faint shadow lay over my spirit.

"In the late autumn some theatricals were got up for charity. I walked into the Governor's box (I had been invited in for the extr'acte.) I looked, and next to the Governor's wife sat Anna Alexievna, and once more I had that ineffable, throbbing sensation of beauty, and sweet, caressing eyes, and again that feeling of intimacy.

"We sat side by side, then we went into the foyer.

" 'You have grown thinner,' she said. 'Have you been ill?'

" 'Yes, I have had rheumatism in the shoulder, and I can't sleep in the damp weather.'

" 'You look worn out. Before, in the spring, when you came to dinner, you looked younger and fresher. You were animated, talked a lot, were very interesting, and, I confess, I was rather attracted by you. Somehow, during the course of the summer, the thought of you often came to my mind, and today, as I was coming to the theater, I had a feeling that I was going to see you.'

"She laughed a little, then continued:

" 'No, you don't look well today, and it ages you.'

"The next day I lunched with the Luganovitches. After lunch they went to their country villa to make arrangements for the winter, and I went with them. I returned to town with them, and partook of tea, at midnight, in the quiet of their own room, by the fire, and with the young mother going backwards and forwards to see if her baby daughter was asleep. After this, each time I went to town, I never missed going to the Luganovitches'. They got used to me and I to them, and I generally arrived quite unceremoniously without even announcing my visit.

" 'Who is that?' a drawling voice, which seemed to me so beautiful, sounded from a distant room. 'It is Paul Constantinitch,' the maid or the nurse would answer.

"Anna Alexievna would come forward and greet me with a preoccupied air, and each time asked me: 'Why have you not been here for so long? Has anything happened?'

"Her manner, her delicate refined hand, which she held out to me, her simple clothes, her coiffure, her voice, her way of walking, each time produced on me the impression of something new, unwonted, and of importance in my life. We would talk for a long while, and for a long while remain silent, each occupied with his own thoughts, or she would play to me on the piano. If there was no one at home, I would wait there and talk with the nurse, play with the child, or extend myself on the Turkish divan in the sitting-room, and read

the newspapers; and when Anna Alexievna returned home, I used to meet her in the vestibule, relieve her of all her purchases, and somehow each time I carried those parcels with as much care and solemnity as if I had been a small boy.

"There is a saying: 'If women had no cares, they would make them,' so the Luganovitches, having no cares, fussed about me, and if I stayed away from town for some while it meant I was ill, or something had happened, and they both worried. They worried because I, a well-educated man, knowing several languages, instead of being occupied with studies or literature, lived in the country, working hard, like a squirrel on a wheel, and always for nothing. They thought I was unhappy, and if I spoke, joked, or ate, it was all in order to hide my troubles, and even when I was feeling hilarious, and everything was going well, I noticed their mindful looks at me.

"They were particularly compassionate when anything really tiresome happened. If I was pressed by some creditor, or had not enough money for the quarterly accounts, both husband and wife would whisper at the window; then he would come up to me and, with an anxious look on his face, say:

" 'Paul Constantinitch, if you are in want of money at this moment, my wife and I beg you not to hesitate, but to accept it from us.'

"And the tips of his ears turned red with emotion. The same thing would occur on other occasions. They would whisper together at the window, then he would come up to me with red-tipped ears, and say: 'I and my wife earnestly beg of you to accept this little present.' And he would present me with cuff links, a cigarette case, or a lamp; I, in return, would send them game, butter, and flowers from the country. I must mention, by the way, that they were quite affluent people. In the beginning I often had to borrow money, and was not very particular from whom, so long as I got it, but no power on earth would make me take any from the Luganovitches. How useless it seems to mention all this! Still, I was not happy In the house, in the fields, in the shed, I thought of her; I strove to understand the mystery of a young, pretty, clever woman marrying an uninteresting man, much older than herself (her husband was over forty), having children by him; I strove to understand the mystery of this uninteresting man, worthy and simple-minded, who reasoned with such tedious common-sense, who at balls and evening parties kept company with staid people, was dull, and of no account, wore a docile detached expression, just as if he had been led there as a victim, who, however, believed he had a right to be happy, and have children by her; and I strove to understand why it was he she had met, and not I, and wherefore this had been necessary, that this terrible mistake should have befallen us.

"Each time I arrived in town I saw in her eyes that she had been expecting me, and she herself confessed to me that from early dawn she had had a kind of feeling that I was coming. We talked for long whiles together, and were silent for long whiles, but we never owned to each other our love—we timidly and jealously hid it away. We were afraid of everything which might even disclose it to ourselves. My love was

deep and tender, yet I reasoned and asked myself whither our love might lead us if our strength failed us to fight against it. It seemed to me unthinkable, that my silent, unhappy love should abruptly sunder the tranquil stream of her husband's life, that of her children, and that home where all were so fond of me, and so esteemed me. Would it be honorable? She might come with me, but whither? Whither could I take her? It would be another matter if I were leading a brilliant, interesting life—if I, for instance, were fighting for the freedom of my country, or were a noted scholar, artist, painter, but instead, I should be tempting her to leave one commonplace, dull home, for another equally or more so. And how long would our happiness last? What would happen to it in the event of my falling ill, dying, or merely if we ceased to love each other? And she apparently reasoned to herself in the same manner. She thought of her husband and children, of her mother, who loved her husband as her own son. If she gave way to her feelings she would have to lie or speak the truth, and in her situation one would have been as dreadful and unpleasant to her as the other.

"She was tormented by questions such as: 'Will this love bring me happiness, shall I not add difficulties to his life, which is already so difficult and full of every kind of misfortune?' She had an idea, too, that she was no longer young enough for me, not energetic or fond enough of work to start a new life, and she often spoke to her husband of the need of my marrying a clever estimable girl, who would be a good housewife and helpmate—but added, at once, that such a girl was hardly to be found in the whole town.

"Meanwhile the years went by. Anna Alexievna had now two children. When I appeared at the Luganovitches' the servant smiled a welcome, the children shouted that 'Uncle Paul had come,' and clung around my neck; everyone was overjoyed, and no one understood what was taking place in my mind, for they thought that I too was overjoyed. They regarded me as a high-principled being. Grown-ups and children felt that a high-principled being had entered their room, and this evoked a kind of charm in their attitude towards me, just as if in my presence their life became yet purer and more beautiful. Anna Alexievna and I used to go to the theater together, each time on foot; in our seats we sat side by side, our shoulders touching. I took her glasses out of her hand without asking. At those times I felt she was everything to me, that she was mine, that we could not get on one without the other; but, by some strange misconception, after the theater we separated, and each time parted from one another as strangers. The town was already saying God knows what about us, but there was not one word of truth in all the things that were said.

"In later years Anna Alexievna began to stay away very often with her mother or her sister. There were times when she showed signs of an unsettled state of mind, of the consciousness of an unfulfilled and wasted life; when she would see neither her husband nor children; and she underwent a treatment for nerves.

"We did not speak about it, nor did anyone else, but in the presence of outsiders she was seized with some odd

kind of exasperation towards me; she disagreed with whatever I said, and if I disputed anything she always took the side of my opponents. If I dropped anything, she would say coldly:

"'I compliment you.'

"When I went to the theater with her, if I forgot to take my glasses, she would say afterwards: 'I knew you would forget them.'

"Fortunately — or unfortunately— there is nothing in life which does not end sooner or later. The day of parting came when Luganovitch was nominated President in one of the Southern Districts. Everything had to be sold —furniture, horses, country villa. They went to the villa to have a look round, and then turned back to have one more last look at the garden and the green roof. It made us all sad, and I realized that the time had come not only to take farewell of the villa. It was decided that at the end of August we would send Anna Alexievna off to the Crimea, whither her doctor had ordered her, and Luganovitch and the children would leave soon after for his southern Government.

"A large number of people came to see Anna Alexievna off. She said goodbye to her husband and children, there was but a minute before the third ring of the bell, when I rushed into her compartment to place on the rack one of her baskets, which she had almost forgotten, and we had then to say goodbye. When in the compartment our glances met, our moral strength deserted us both, I clasped her in my arms, she pressed her face against my shoulder, and tears filled her eyes. I kissed her face, neck, hands; our tears flowed— oh, how unhappy we both were! I confessed to her that I loved her, and with a pain, which transfixed my heart, I realized how unprofitable, trivial, and deceptive all that was which hindered our love. I understood that when you love, your cognizance of that love must derive from something higher and more important than happiness or unhappiness, sin or well-doing, in its ordinary acceptance, or that there is no need to reason at all about it.

"I kissed her for the last time, pressed her hand, and we parted—forever. The train had started, I sat down in the next compartment, which was empty; there I sat until the next station, shedding tears. I then got out and walked back to Sophino. . ."

Isle of Voices

KEOLA was married with Lehua, daughter of Kalamake the wise man of Molokai, and he kept his dwelling with the father of his wife. There was no man more cunning than that prophet; he read the stars, he could divine by the bodies of the dead, and by the means of evil creatures: he could go alone into the highest parts of the mountain, into the region of the hobgoblins, and there he would lay snares to entrap the spirits of ancient.

For this reason no man was more consulted in all the Kingdom of Hawaii. Prudent people bought, and sold, and married, and laid out their lives by his

counsels; and the King had him twice to Kona to seek the treasures of Kamehameha. Neither was any man more feared: of his enemies, some had dwindled in sickness by the virtue of his incantations, and some had been spirited away, the life and the clay both, so that folk looked in vain for so much as a bone of their bodies. It was rumoured that he had the art or the gift of the old heroes. Men had seen him at night upon the mountains, stepping from one cliff to the next; they had seen him walking in the high forest, and his head and shoulders were above the trees.

This Kalamake was a strange man to see. He was come of the best blood in Molokai and Maui, of a pure descent; and yet he was more white to look upon than any foreigner; his hair the colour of dry grass, and his eyes red and very blind, so that "Blind as Kalamake that can see across to-morrow," was a by-word in the islands.

Of all these doings of his father-in-law, Keola knew a little by the common repute, a little more he suspected, and the rest he ignored. But there was one thing troubled him. Kalamake was a man that spared for nothing, whether to eat or to drink or to wear; and for all he paid in bright new dollars. "Bright as Kalamake's dollars," was another saying in the Eight Isles. Yet he neither sold, nor planted, nor took hire —only now and then from his sorceries —and there was no source conceivable for so much silver coin.

It chanced one day Keola's wife was gone upon a visit to Kaunakakai on the lee side of the island, and the men were forth at the sea-fishing. But Keola was an idle dog, and he lay in the veranda and watched the surf beat on the shore and the birds fly about the cliff. It was a chief thought with him always—the thought of the bright dollars. When he lay down to bed he would be wondering why they were so many, and when he woke at morn he would be wondering why they were all new; and the thing was never absent from his mind. But this day of all days he made sure in his heart of some discovery. For it seems he had observed the place where Kalamake kept his treasure, which was a lock-fast desk against the parlour wall, under the print of Kamehameha the fifth, and a photograph of Queen Victoria with her crown; and it seems again that, no later than the night before, he found occasion to look in, and behold! the bag lay there empty. And this was the day of the steamer; he could see her smoke off Kalaupapa; and she must soon arrive with a month's goods, tinned salmon and gin, and all manner of rare luxuries for Kalamake.

"Now if he can pay for his goods today," Keola thought, "I shall know for certain that the man is a warlock, and the dollars come out of the Devil's pocket."

While he was so thinking, there was his father-in-law behind him, looking vexed.

"Is that the steamer?" he asked.

"Yes," said Keola. "She has but to call at Pelekunu, and then she will be here."

"There is no help for it then," returned Kalamake, "and I must take you into my confidence, Keola, for the lack of any one better. Come here within the house."

So they stepped together into the parlour, which was a very fine room,

papered and hung with prints, and furnished with a rocking-chair, and a table and a sofa in the European style. There was a shelf of books besides, and a family Bible in the midst of the table, and the lock-fast writing-desk against the wall; so that any one could see it was the house of a man of substance.

Kalamake made Keola close the shutters of the windows, while he himself locked all the doors and set open the lid of the desk. From this he brought forth a pair of necklaces hung with charms and shells, a bundle of dried herbs, and the dried leaves of trees, and a green branch of palm.

"What I am about," said he, "is a thing beyond wonder. The men of old were wise; they wrought marvels, and this among the rest; but that was at night, in the dark, under the fit stars and in the desert. The same will I do here in my own house, and under the plain eye of day." So saying, he put the Bible under the cushion of the sofa so that it was all covered, brought out from the same place a mat of a wonderfully fine texture, and heaped the herbs and leaves on sand in a tin pan. And then he and Keola put on the necklaces, and took their stand upon the opposite corners of the mat.

"The time comes," said the warlock; 'be not afraid."

With that he set flame to the herbs, and began to mutter and wave the branch of palm. At first the light was dim because of the closed shutters; but the herbs caught strongly afire, and the flames beat upon Keola, and the room glowed with the burning; and next the smoke rose and made his head swim and his eyes darken, and the sound of Kalamake muttering ran in his ears. And suddenly, to the mat on which they were standing came a snatch or twitch, that seemed to be more swift than lightning. In the same wink the room was gone, and the house, the breath all beaten from Keola's body. Volumes of sun rolled upon his eyes and head, and he found himself transported to a beach of the sea, under a strong sun, with a great surf roaring: he and the warlock standing there on the same mat, speechless, gasping and grasping at one another, and passing their hands before their eyes.

"What was this?" cried Keola, who came to himself the first, because he was the younger. "The pang of it was like death."

"It matters not," panted Kalamake. "It is now done."

"And, in the name of God, where are we?" cried Keola.

"That is not the question," replied the sorcerer. "Being here, we have matter in our hands, and that we must attend to. Go, while I recover my breath, into the borders of the wood, and bring me the leaves of such and such an herb, and such and such a tree, which you will find to grow there plentifully—three handfuls of each. And be speedy. We must be home again before the steamer comes; it would seem strange if we had disappeared." And he sat on the sand and panted.

Keola went up the beach, which was of shining sand and coral, strewn with singular shells; and he thought in his heart:

"How do I not know this beach? I will come here again and gather shells."

In front of him was a line of palms against the sky; not like the palms of the Eight Islands, but tall and fresh

and beautiful, and hanging out withered fans like gold among the green, and he thought in his heart:

"It is strange I should not have found this grove. I will come here again, when it is warm, to sleep." And he thought, "How warm it has grown suddenly!" For it was winter in Hawaii, and the day had been chill, And he thought also, "Where are the grey mountains? And where is the high cliff with the hanging forest and the wheeling birds?" And the more he considered, the less he might conceive in what quarter of the islands he was fallen.

In the border of the grove, where it met the beach, the herb was growing, but the tree further back. Now, as Keola went toward the tree, he was aware of a young woman who had nothing on her body but a belt of leaves.

"Well!" thought Keola, "they are are not very particular about their dress in this part of the country." And he paused, supposing she would observe him and escape; and seeing that she still looked before her, stood and hummed aloud. Up she leaped at the sound. Her face was ashen; she looked this way and that, and her mouth gaped with the terror of her soul. But it was a strange thing that her eyes did not rest upon Keola.

"Good-day," said he. "You need not be so frightened, I will not eat you." And he had scarce opened his mouth before the young woman fled into the bush.

"These are strange manners," thought Keola, and, not thinking what he did, ran after her.

As he ran, the girl kept crying in some speech that was not practised in Hawaii, yet some of the words were the same, and he knew she kept calling and warning others. And presently he saw more people running—men, women, and children, one with another, all running and crying like people at a fire. And with that he began to grow afraid himself, and returned to Kalamake bringing the leaves. Him he told what he had seen.

"You must pay no heed," said Kalamake. "All this is like a dream and shadows. All will disappear and be forgotten."

"It seemed none saw me," said Keola.

"And none did," replied the sorcerer. "We walk here in the broad sun invisible by reason of these charms. Yet they hear us; and therefore it is well to speak softly, as I do."

With that he made a circle round the mat with stones, and in the midst he set the leaves.

"It will be your part," said he, "to keep the leaves alight, and feed the fire slowly. While they blaze (which is but for a little moment) I must do my errand; and before the ashes blacken, the same power that brought us carries us away. Be ready now with the match, and do you call me in good time lest the flames burn out and I be left."

As soon as the leaves caught, the sorcerer leaped like a deer out of the circle, and began to race along the beach like a hound that has been bathing. As he ran, he kept stooping to snatch shells; and it seemed to Keola that they glittered as he took them. The leaves blazed with a clear flame that consumed them swiftly; and presently Keola had but a handful left, and the sorcerer was far off, running and stopping.

"Back!" cried Keola. "Back! The leaves are near done."

At that Kalamake turned, and if he had run before, now he flew. But fast as he ran, the leaves burned faster. The flame was ready to expire when, with a great leap, he bounded on the mat. The wind of his leaping blew it out; and with that the beach was gone, and the sun and the sea; and they stood once more in the dimness of the shuttered parlour, and were once more shaken and blinded; and on the mat betwixt them lay a pile of shining dollars. Keola ran to the shutters; and there was the steamer tossing in the swell close in.

The same night Kalamake took his son-in-law apart, and gave him five dollars in his hand.

"Keola," said he, "if you are a wise man (which I am doubtful of) you will think you slept this afternoon on the veranda, and dreamed as you were sleeping. I am a man of few words, and I have for my helpers people of short memories."

Never a word more said Kalamake, nor referred again to that affair. But it ran all the while in Keola's head—if he were lazy before, he would now do nothing.

"Why should I work," thought he, "when I have a father-in-law who makes dollars of seashells?"

Presently his share was spent. He spent it all upon fine clothes. And then he was sorry:

"For," thought he, "I had done better to have bought a concertina, with which I might have entertained myself all day long." And then he began to grow vexed with Kalamake.

"This man has the soul of a dog," thought he. "He can gather dollars when he pleases on the beach, and he leaves me to pine for a concertina! Let him beware: I am no child, I am as cunning as he, and hold his secret." With that he spoke to his wife Lehua, and complained of her father's manners.

"I would let my father be," said Lehua. "He is a dangerous man to cross."

"I care that for him!" cried Keola; and snapped his fingers. "I have him by the nose. I can make him do what I please." And he told Lehua the story.

But she shook her head.

"You may do what you like," said she; "but as sure as you thwart my father, you will be no more heard of Think of this person, and that person; think of Hua, who was a noble of the House of Representatives, and went to Honolulu every year; and not a bone or a hair of him was found. Remember Kamau, and how he wasted to a thread, so that his wife lifted him with one hand. Keola, you are a baby in my father's hands; he will take you with his thumb and finger and eat you like a shrimp."

Now Keola was truly afraid of Kalamake, but he was vain too, and these words of his wife's incensed him.

"Very well," said he, "if that is what you think of me, I will show how much you are deceived." And he went straight to where his father-in-law was sitting in the parlour.

"Kalamake," said he, "I want a concertina."

"Do you, indeed?" said Kalamake.

"Yes," said he, "and I may as well tell you plainly, I mean to have it. A man who picks up dollars on the beach can certainly afford a concertina."

"I had no idea you had so much

spirit," replied the sorcerer. "I thought you were a timid, useless lad, and I cannot describe how much pleased I am to find I was mistaken. Now I begin to think I may have found an assistant and sorcerer in my difficult business. A concertina? You shall have the best in Honolulu. And to-night, as soon as it is dark, you and I will go and find the money."

"Shall we return to the beach?" asked Keola.

"No, no!" replied Kalamake; "you must begin to learn more of my secrets. Last time I taught you to pick shells; this time I shall teach you to catch fish. Are you strong enough to launch Pili's boat?"

"I think I am," returned Keola. "But why should we not take your own, which is afloat already?"

"I have a reason which you will understand thoroughly before to-morrow," said Kalamake. "Pili's boat is the better suited for my purpose. So, if you please, let us meet there as soon as it is dark; and in the meanwhile, let us keep our own counsel, for there is no cause to let the family into our business."

Honey is not more sweet than was the voice of Kalamake, and Keola could scarce contain his satisfaction.

"I might have had my concertina weeks ago," thought he, "and there is nothing needed in this world but a little courage."

Presently after he spied Lehua weeping, and was half in a mind to tell her all was well.

"But no," thinks he; "I shall wait till I can show her the concertina; we shall see what the chit will do then. Perhaps she will understand in the future that her husband is a man of some intelligence."

As soon as it was dark father and son-in-law launched Pili's boat and set the sail. There was a great sea, and it blew strong from the leeward; but the boat was swift and light and dry, and skimmed the waves. The wizard had a lantern, which he lit and held with his finger through the ring; and the two sat in the stern and smoked cigars, of which Kalamake had always a provision, and spoke like friends of magic and the great sums of money which they could make by its exercise, and what they should buy first, and what second; and Kalamake talked like a father.

Presently he looked all about, and above him at the stars, and back at the island, which was already three parts sunk under the sea, and he seemed to consider ripely his position.

"Look!" says he, "there is Molokai already far behind us, and Maui like a cloud; and by the bearing of these three stars I know I am come where I desire. This part of the sea is called the Sea of the Dead. It is in this place extraordinarily deep, and the floor is all covered with the bones of men, and in the holes of this part gods and goblins keep their habitation. The flow of the sea is to the north, stronger than a shark can swim, and any man who shall here be thrown out of a ship it bears away like a wild horse into the uttermost ocean. Presently he is spent and goes down, and his bones are scattered with the rest, and gods devour his spirit."

Fear came on Keola at the words, and he looked, and by the light of the stars and the lantern, the warlock seemed to change.

"What ails you?" cried Keola, quick and sharp.

"It is not I who am ailing," said the wizard; "but there is one here very sick."

With that he changed his grasp upon the lantern, and, behold! as he drew his finger from the ring, the finger stuck and the ring was burst, and his hand was grown to be of the bigness of three.

At that sight Keola screamed and covered his face.

But Kalamake held up the lantern. "Look rather at my face!" said he—and his head was huge as a barrel; and still he grew and grew as a cloud grows on a mountain, and Keola sat before him screaming, and the boat raced on the great seas.

"And now," said the wizard, "what do you think about that concertina? and are you sure you would not rather have a flute? No?" says he; "that is well, for I do not like my family to be changeable of purpose. But I begin to think I had better get out of this paltry boat, for my bulk swells to a very unusual degree, and if we are not the more careful, she will presently be swamped."

With that he threw his legs over the side. Even as he did so, the greatness of the man grew thirty-fold and forty-fold as swift as sight or thinking, so that he stood in the deep seas to the armpits, and his head and shoulders rose like a high isle, and the swell beat and burst upon his bosom, as it beats and breaks against a cliff. The boat ran still to the north but he reached out his hand, and took the gunwale by the finger and thumb, and broke the side like a biscuit, and Keola was spilled into the sea. And the pieces of the boat the sorcerer crushed in the hollow of his hand and flung miles away into the night.

"Excuse my taking the lantern," said he; "for I have a long wade before me, and the land is far, and the bottom of the sea uneven, and I feel the bones under my toes."

And he turned and went off walking with great strides; and as often as Keola sank in the trough he could see him no longer; but as often as he was heaved upon the crest, there he was striding and dwindling, and he held the lamp high over his head, and the waves broke white about him as he went.

Since first the islands were fished out of the sea, there was never a man so terrified as this Keola. He swam indeed, but he swam as puppies swim when they are cast in to drown, and knew not wherefore. He could but think of the hugeness of the swelling of the warlock, of that face which was great as a mountain, of those shoulders that were broad as an isle, and of the seas that beat on them in vain. He thought, too, of the concertina, and shame took hold upon him; and of the dead men's bones, and fear shook him.

Of a sudden he was aware of something dark against the stars that tossed, and a light below, and a brightness of the cloven sea; and he heard speech of men. He cried out aloud and a voice answered; and in a twinkling the bows of a ship hung above him on a wave like a thing balanced, and swooped down. He caught with his two hands in the chains of her, and the next moment was buried in the rushing seas, and the next hauled on board by seamen.

They gave him gin and biscuit and dry clothes, and asked him how he came where they found him, and whether the

light which they had seen was the lighthouse, Lae o Ka Laau. But Keola knew white men are like children and only believe their own stories; so about himself he told them what he pleased, and as for the light (which was Kalamake's lantern) he vowed he had seen none.

This ship was a schooner bound for Honolulu, and then to trade in the low islands; and by a very good chance for Keola she had lost a man off the bowsprit in a squall. It was no use talking. Keola durst not stay in the Eight Islands. Word goes so quickly, and all men are so fond to talk and carry news, that if he hid in the north end of Kauai or in the south end of Kau, the wizard would have wind of it before a month, and he must perish. So he did what seemed the most prudent, and shipped sailor in the place of the man who had been drowned.

In some ways the ship was a good place. The food was extraordinarily rich and plenty, with biscuits and salt beef every day, and pea-soup and puddings made of flour and suet twice a week, so that Keola grew fat. The captain also was a good man, and the crew no worse than other whites. The trouble was the mate, who was the most difficult man to please Keola had ever met with, and beat and cursed him daily, both for what he did and what he did not. The blows that he dealt were very sure, for he was strong; and the words he used were very unpalatable, for Keola was come of a good family and accustomed to respect. And what was the worst of all, whenever Keola found a chance to sleep, there was the mate awake and stirring him up with a rope's end. Keola saw it would never do; and he made up his mind to run away.

They were about a month out from Honolulu when they made the land. It was a fine starry night, the sea was smooth as well as the sky fair; it blew a steady Trade; and there was the island on their weather bow, a ribbon of palm-trees lying flat along the sea. The captain and the mate looked at it with the night glass, and named the name of it, and talked of it, beside the wheel where Keola was steering. It seemed it was an isle where no traders came. By the captain's way, it was an isle besides where no man dwelt; but the mate thought otherwise.

"I don't give a cent for the directory," said he. "I've been past here one night in the schooner *Eugénie:* it was just such a night as this; they were fishing with torches, and the beach was thick with lights like a town."

"Well, well," says the captain, "it's steep-to, that's the great point; and there ain't any outlying dangers by the chart, so we'll just hug the lee side of it. Keep her ramping full, don't I tell you!" he cried to Keola, who was listening so hard that he forgot to steer.

And the mate cursed him, and swore that Kanaka was for no use in the world, and if he got started after him with a belaying-pin, it would be a cold day for Keola.

And so the captain and mate lay down on the house together, and Keola was left to himself.

"This island will do very well for me," he thought; "if no traders deal there, the mate will never come. And as for Kalamake, it is not possible he can ever get as far as this."

With that he kept edging the schooner

nearer in. He had to do this quietly, for it was the trouble with these white men, and above all with the mate, that you could never be sure of them; they would all be sleeping sound, or else pretending, and if a sail shook, they would jump to their feet and fall on you with a rope's end. So Keola edged her up little by little, and kept all drawing. And presently the land was close on board, and the sound of the sea on the sides of it grew loud.

With that, the mate sat up suddenly upon the house.

"What are you doing?" he roars. "You'll have the ship ashore!"

And he made one bound for Keola, and Keola made another clean over the rail and plump into the starry sea. When he came up again, the schooner had payed off on her true course, and the mate stood by the wheel himself, and Keola heard him cursing. The sea was smooth under the lee of the island; it was warm besides, and Keola had his sailor's knife, so he had no fear of sharks. A little way before him the trees stopped; there was a break in the line of the land like the mouth of a harbour; and the tide, which was then flowing, took him up and carried him through. One minute he was without, and the next within, and floated there in a wide shallow water, bright with ten thousand stars, and all about him was the ring of the land, with its string of palm-trees. And he was amazed, because this was a kind of island he had never heard of.

The time of Keola in that place was in two periods—the period when he was alone, and the period when he was there with the tribe. At first he sought everywhere and found no man; only some houses standing in a hamlet, and the marks of fires. But the ashes of the fires were cold and the rains had washed them away; and the winds had blown, and some of the huts were overthrown. It was here he took his dwelling; and he made a fire drill, and a shell hook, and fished and cooked his fish, and climbed after green cocoa-nuts, the juice of which he drank, for in all the isle there was no water. The days were long to him, and the nights terrifying. He made a lamp of cocoa-shell, and drew the oil of the ripe nuts, and made a wick of fiber; and when evening came he closed up his hut, and lit his lamp, and lay and trembled till morning. Many a time he thought in his heart he would have been better in the bottom of the sea, his bones rolling there with the others.

All this while he kept by the inside of the island, for the huts were on the shore of the lagoon, and it was there the palms grew best, and the lagoon itself abounded with good fish. And to the other side he went once only, and he looked but once at the beach of the ocean, and came away shaking. For the look of it, with its bright sand, and strewn shells, and strong sun and surf, went sore against his inclination.

"It cannot be," he thought, "and yet it is very like. And how do I know? These white men, although they pretend to know where they are sailing, must take their chance like other people. So that after all we may have sailed in a circle, and I may be quite near to Molokai, and this may be the very beach where my father-in-law gathers his dollars."

So after that he was prudent, and kept to the land-side.

It was perhaps a month later, when the people of the place arrived—the fill of six great boats. They were a fine race of men, and spoke a tongue that sounded very different from the tongue of Hawaii, but so many of the words were the same that it was not difficult to understand. The men besides were very courteous, and the women very towardly; and they made Keola welcome, and built him a house, and gave him a wife; and what surprised him the most, he was never sent to work with the young men.

And now Keola had three periods. First he had a period of being very sad, and then he had a period when he was pretty merry. Last of all came the third, when he was the most terrified man in the four oceans.

The cause of the first period was the girl he had to wife. He was in doubt about the island, and he might have been in doubt about the speech, of which he had heard so little when he came there with the wizard on the mat. But about his wife there was no mistake conceivable, for she was the same girl that ran from him crying in the wood. So he had sailed all this way, and might as well have stayed in Molokai; and had left home and wife and all his friends for no other cause but to escape his enemy, and the place he had come to was the wizard's hunting-ground, and the place where he walked invisible. It was at this period when he kept the most close to the lagoon-side, and as far as he dared, abode in the cover of his hut.

The cause of the second period was talk he heard from his wife and the chief islanders. Keola himself said little. He was never so sure of his new friends, for he judged they were too civil to be wholesome, and since he had grown better acquainted with his father-in-law the man had grown more cautious. So he told them nothing of himself, but only his name and descent, and that he came from the Eight Islands, and what fine islands they were; and about the King's palace in Honolulu, and how he was a chief friend of the King and the missionaries. But he put many questions and learned much. The island where he was was called the Isle of Voices; it belonged to the tribe, but they made their home upon another, three hours' sail to the southward. There they lived and had their permanent houses, and it was a rich island, where were eggs and chickens and pigs, and ships came trading with rum and tobacco. It was there the schooner had gone after Keola deserted; there, too, the mate had died, like the fool of a white man as he was. It seems, when the ship came, it was the beginning of the sickly season in that isle, when the fish of the lagoon are poisonous, and all who eat of them swell up and die. The mate was told of it; he saw the boats preparing, because in that season the people leave that island and sail to the Isle of Voices; but he was a fool of a white man, who would believe no stories but his own, and he caught one of these fish, cooked it and ate it, and swelled up and died, which was good news to Keola. As for the Isle of Voices, it lay solitary the most part of the year, only now and then a boat's crew came for copra, and in the bad season, when the fish at the main isle were poisonous, the tribe dwelt there in a body. It had its name from a marvel, for it seemed the seaside of it was all beset with in-

visible devils; day and night you heard them talking one with another in strange tongues; day and night little fires blazed up and were extinguished on the beach; and what was the cause of these doings no man might conceive. Keola asked them if it were the same in their own island where they stayed, and they told him no, not there; nor yet in any other of some hundred isles that lay all about them in that sea; but it was a thing peculiar to the Isle of Voices. They told him also that these fires and voices were ever on the sea-side and in the seaward fringes of the wood, and a man might dwell by the lagoon two thousand years (if he could live so long) and never be any way troubled; and even on the sea-side the devils did no harm if let alone. Only once a chief had cast a spear at one of the voices, and the same night he fell out of a cocoanut-palm and was killed.

Keola thought a good bit with himself. He saw he would be all right when the tribe returned to the main island, and right enough where he was, if he kept by the lagoon, yet he had a mind to make things righter if he could. So he told the high chief he had once been in an isle that was pestered the same way, and the folk had found a means to cure that trouble.

"There was a tree growing in the bush there," says he, "and it seems these devils came to get the leaves of it. So the people of the isle cut down the tree wherever it was found, and the devils came no more."

They asked what kind of a tree this was, and he showed them the tree of which Kalamake burned the leaves. They found it hard to believe, yet the idea tickled them. Night after night the old men debated it in their councils, but the high chief (though he was a brave man) was afraid of the matter, and reminded them daily of the chief who cast a spear against the voices and was killed, and the thought of that brought all to a stand again.

Though he could not yet bring about the destruction of the trees, Keola was well enough pleased, and began to look about him and take pleasure in his days; and, among other things, he was the kinder to his wife, so that the girl began to love him greatly. One day he came to the hut, and she lay on the ground lamenting.

"Why," said Keola, "what is wrong with you now?"

She declared it was nothing.

The same night she woke him. The lamp burned very low, but he saw by her face she was in sorrow.

"Keola," she said, "put your ear to my mouth that I may whisper, for no one must hear us. Two days before the boats begin to be got ready, go you to the sea-side of the isle and lie in a thicket. We shall choose that place beforehand, you and I; and hide food; and every night I shall come near by there singing. So when a night comes and you do not hear me, you shall know we are clean gone out of the island, and you may come forth again in safety."

The soul of Keola died within him.

"What is this?" he cried. "I cannot live among devils. I will not be left behind upon this isle. I am dying to leave it."

"You will never leave it alive, my poor Keola," said the girl; "for to tell you the truth, my people are eaters of men; but this they keep secret. And

the reason they will kill you before we leave is because in our island ships come, and Donat-Kimaran comes and talks for the French, and there is a white trader there in a house with a veranda, and a catechist. Oh, that is a fine place indeed! The trader has barrels filled with flour; and a French warship once came in the lagoon and gave everybody wine and biscuit. Ah, my poor Keola, I wish I could take you there, for great is my love to you, and it is the finest place in the seas except Papeete."

So now Keola was the most terrified man in the four oceans. He had heard tell of eaters of men in the south islands, and the thing had always been a fear to him; and here it was knocking at his door. He had heard besides, by travellers, of their practises, and how when they are in a mind to eat a man, they cherish and fondle him like a mother with a favourite baby. And he saw this must be his own case; and that was why he had been housed, and fed, and wived, and liberated from all work; and why the old men and the chiefs discoursed with him like a person of weight. So he lay on his bed and railed upon his destiny; and the flesh curdled on his bones.

The next day the people of the tribe were very civil, as their way was. They were elegant speakers, and they made beautiful poetry, and jested at meals, so that a missionary must have died laughing. It was little enough Keola cared for their fine ways; all he saw was the white teeth shining in their mouths, and his gorge rose at the sight; and when they were done eating, he went and lay in the bush like a dead man.

The next day it was the same, and then his wife followed him.

"Keola," she said, "if you do not eat, I tell you plainly you will be killed and cooked to-morrow. Some of the old chiefs are murmuring already. They think you are fallen sick and must lose flesh."

With that Keola got to his feet, and anger burned in him.

"It is little I care one way or the other," said he. "I am between the devil and the deep sea. Since die I must, let me die the quickest way; and since I must be eaten at the best of it, let me rather be eaten by hobgoblins than by men. Farewell," said he, and he left her standing, and walked to the sea-side of the island.

It was all bare in the strong sun; there was no sign of man, only the beach was trodden, and all about him as he went, the voices talked and whispered, and the little fires sprang up and burned down. All tongues of the earth were spoken there: the French, the Dutch, the Russian, the Tamil, the Chinese. Whatever land knew sorcery, there were some of its people whispering in Keola's ear. That beach was thick as a cried fair, yet no man seen; and as he walked he saw the shells vanish before him, and no man to pick them up. I think the devil would have been afraid to be alone in such a company; but Keola was past fear and courted death. When the fires sprang up, he charged for them like a bull. Bodiless voices called to and fro; unseen hands poured sand upon the flames; and they were gone from the beach before he reached them.

"It is plain Kalamake is not here," he thought, "as I must have been killed long since."

With that he sat him down in the

margin of the wood, for he was tired, and put his chin upon his hands. The business before his eyes continued; the beach babbled with voices, and the fires sprang up and sank, and the shells vanished and were renewed again even while he looked.

"It was a by-day when I was here before," he thought, "for it was nothing to this."

And his head was dizzy with the thought of these millions and millions of dollars, and all these hundreds and hundreds of persons culling them upon the beach and flying in the air higher and swifter than eagles.

"And to think how they have fooled me with their talk of mints," says he, "and that money was made there, when it is clear that all the new coin in all the world is gathered on these sands! But I will know better the next time!" said he.

And at last, he knew not very well how or when, sleep fell on Keola, and he forgot the island and all his sorrows.

Early the next day, before the sun was yet up, a bustle woke him. He awoke in fear, for he thought the tribe had caught him napping; but it was no such matter. Only, on the beach in front of him, the bodiless voices called and shouted one upon another, and it seemed they all passed and swept beside him up the coast of the island.

"What is afoot now?" thinks Keola. And it was plain to him it was something beyond ordinary, for the fires were not lighted nor the shells taken, but the bodiless voices kept posting up the beach, and hailing and dying away; and others following, and by the sound of them these wizards should be angry.

"It is not me they are angry at," thought Keola, "for they pass me close."

As when hounds go by, or horses in a race, or city folk coursing to a fire, and all men join and follow after, so it was now with Keola; and he knew not what he did, nor why he did it, but there, lo and behold! he was running with the voices.

So he turned one point of the island, and this brought him in view of a second; and there he remembered the wizard trees to have been growing by the score together in a wood. From this point there went up a hubbub of men crying not to be described; and by the sound of them, those that he ran with shaped their course for the same quarter. A little nearer, and there began to mingle with the outcry the crash of many axes. And at this a thought came at last into his mind that the high chief had consented; that the men of the tribe had set to cutting down these trees; that word had gone about the isle from sorcerer to sorcerer, and these were all now assembling to defend their trees. Desire of strange things swept him on. He posted with the voices, crossed the beach, and came into the borders of the wood, and stood astonished. One tree had fallen, others were part hewed away. There was the tribe clustered. They were back to back, and bodies lay, and blood flowed among their feet. The hue of fear was on all their faces; their voices went up to heaven shrill as a weasel's cry.

Have you seen a child when he is all alone and has a wooden sword, and fights, leaping and hewing with the empty air? Even so the man-eaters huddled back to back and heaved up their axes, and laid on, and screamed

as they laid on, and behold! no man to contend with them! only here and there Keola saw an axe swinging over against them without hands; and time and again a man of the tribe would fall before it, clove in twain or burst asunder, and his soul sped howling.

For awhile Keola looked upon this prodigy like one that dreams, and then fear took him by the midst as sharp as death, that he should behold such doings. Even in that same flash the high chief of the clan espied him standing, and pointed and called out his name. Thereat the whole tribe saw him also, and their eyes flashed, and their teeth clashed.

"I am too long here," thought Keola, and ran farther out of the wood and down the beach, not caring whither.

"Keola!" said a voice close by upon the empty sand.

"Lehua! is that you!" he cried, and gasped, and looked in vain for her; but by the eyesight he was stark alone.

"I saw you pass before," the voice answered; "but you would not hear me. Quick! get the leaves and the herbs, and let us flee."

"You are there with the mat?" he asked.

"Here, at your side," said she. And he felt her arms about him. "Quick! the leaves and the herbs, before my father can get back!"

So Keola ran for his life, and fetched the wizard fuel; and Lehua guided him back, and set his feet upon the mat, and made the fire. All the time of its burning, the sound of the battle towered out of the wood; the wizards and the man-eaters hard at fight; the wizards, the viewless ones, roaring out aloud like bulls upon the mountain, and the men of the tribe replying shrill and savage out of the terror of their souls. And all the time of the burning, Keola stood there and listened, and shook, and watched how the unseen hands of Lehua poured the leaves. She poured them fast, and the flame burned high, and scorched Keola's hands; and she speeded and blew the burning with her breath. The last leaf was eaten, the flame fell, and the shock followed, and there were Keola and Lehua in the room at home.

Now, when Keola could see his wife at last he was mighty pleased, and he was mighty pleased to be home again in Molokai and sit down beside a bowl of poi—for they make no poi on board ships, and there was none in the Isle of Voices—and he was out of the body with pleasure to be clean escaped out of the hands of the eaters of men. But there was another matter not so clear, and Lehua and Keola talked of it all night and were troubled. There was Kalamake left upon the isle. If, by the blessing of God, he could but stick there, all were well; but should he escape and return to Molokai, it would be an ill day for his daughter and her husband. They spoke of his gift of swelling, and whether he could wade that distance in the seas. But Keola knew by this time where that island was—and that is to say, in the Low or Dangerous Archipelago. So they fetched the atlas and looked upon the distance in the map, and by what they would make of it, it seemed a far way for an old gentleman to walk. Still, it would not do to make too sure of a warlock like Kalamake, and they determined at last to take counsel of a white missionary.

So the first one that came by Keola told him everything. And the missionary was very sharp on him for taking the second wife in the low island; but for all the rest, he vowed he could make neither head nor tail of it.

"However," says he, "if you think this money of your father's ill-gotten, my advice to you would be give some of it to the lepers and some to the missionary fund. And as for this extraordinary rigmarole, you can not do better than keep it to yourselves."

But he warned the police at Honolulu that, by all he could make out, Kalamake and Keola had been coining false money, and it would not be amiss to watch them.

Keola and Lehua took his advice, and gave many dollars to the lepers and the fund. And no doubt the advice must have been good, for from that day to this, Kalamake has never more been heard of. But whether he was slain in the battle by the trees, or whether he is still kicking his heels upon the Isle of Voices, who shall say?

Five Suitors

A WOMAN of the daughters of the merchants was married to a man who was a great traveller. It chanced once that he set out for a far country and was absent so long that his wife, for pure ennui, fell in love with a handsome young man of the sons of the merchants, and they loved each other with exceeding love. One day, the youth quarrelled with another man, who lodged a complaint against him with the Chief of Police, and he cast him into prison. When the news came to the merchant's wife his mistress, she well-nigh lost her wits; then she arose and donning her richest clothes repaired to the house of the Chief of Police. She saluted him and presented a written petition to this purport:—"He thou hast clapped in jail is my brother, such and such, who fell out with such an one; and those who testified against him bore false witness. He hath been wrongfully imprisoned, and I have none other to come in to me nor to provide for my support; therefore I beseech thee of thy grace to release him."

When the magistrate had read the paper, he cast his eyes on her and fell in love with her forthright; so he said to her, "Go into the house, till I bring him before me; then I will send for thee and thou shalt take him." "O my lord," replied she, "I have none to protect me save Almighty Allah!: I am a stranger and may not enter any man's abode." Quoth the Wali, "I will not let him go, except thou come to my home and I take my will of thee." Rejoined she, "If it must be so, thou must needs come to my lodging and sit and sleep the siesta and rest the whole day there." "And where is thy abode?" asked he; and she answered, "In such a place," and appointed him for such a time. Then she went out from him, leaving his heart taken with love of her, and she repaired to the Kazi of the city, to whom she said, "O our lord the Kazi!" He exclaimed, "Yes!" and she continued,

"Look into my case, and thy reward be with Allah the Most High!" Quoth he, "Who hath wronged thee?" and quoth she, "O my lord, I have a brother and I have none but that one, and it is on his account that I come to thee; because the Wali hath imprisoned him for a criminal and men have borne false witness against him that he is a wrongdoer; and I beseech thee to intercede for him with the Chief of Police." When the Kazi looked on her, he fell in love with her forthright and said to her, "Enter the house and rest awhile with my handmaids whilst I send to the Wali to release thy brother. If I knew the money-fine which is upon him, I would pay it out of my own purse, so I may have my desire of thee, for thou pleasest me with thy sweet speech." Quoth she, "If thou, O my lord, do thus, we must not blame others." Quoth he, "An thou wilt not come in, wend thy ways."

Then said she, "An thou wilt have it so, O our lord, it will be privier and better in my place than in thine, for here are slave-girls and eunuchs and goers-in and comers-out, and indeed I am a woman who wotteth naught of this fashion; but need compelleth." Asked the Kazi, "And where is thy house?"; and she answered, "In such a place," and appointed him for the same day and time as the Chief of Police. Then she went out from him to the Wazir, to whom she preferred her petition for the release from prison of her brother who was absolutely necessary to her: but he also required her of herself, saying, "Suffer me to have my will of thee and I will set thy brother free." Quoth she, "An thou wilt have it so, be it in my house, for there it will be privier both for me and for thee. It is not far distant and thou knowest that which behoveth us women of cleanliness and adornment." Asked he, "Where is thy house?" "In such a place," answered she and appointed him for the same time as the two others.

Then she went out from him to the King of the city and told him her story and sought of him her brother's release. "Who imprisoned him?" enquired he; and she replied, "'Twas thy Chief of Police." When the King heard her speech, it transpierced his heart with the arrows of love and he bade her enter the palace with him, that he might send to the Kazi and release her brother. Quoth she, "O King, this thing is easy to thee, whether I will or nill; and if the King will indeed have this of me, it is of my good fortune; but, if he come to my house, he will do me the more honour by setting step therein.

Quoth the King, "We will not cross thee in this." So she appointed him for the same time as the three others, and told him where her house was.

Then she left him and betaking herself to a man which was a carpenter, said to him, "I would have thee make me a cabinet with four compartments one above the other, each with its door for locking up. Let me know thy hire and I will give it thee." Replied he, "My price will be four dinars; but, O noble lady and well-protected, if thou wilt vouchsafe me thy favours, I will ask nothing of thee." Rejoined she, "An there be no help but that thou have it so, then make thou five compartments with their padlocks;" and she appointed him to bring it exactly on the day required. Said he, "It is well; sit down, O my lady, and I will make

it for thee forthright, and after I will come to thee at my leisure." So she sat down by him, whilst he fell to work on the cabinet, and when he had made an end of it she chose to see it at once carried home and set up in the sitting-chamber. Then she took four gowns and carried them to the dyer, who dyed them each of a different colour; after which she applied herself to making ready meat and drink; fruits, flowers and perfumes. Now when the appointed trysting day came, she donned her costliest dress and adorned herself and scented herself, then spread the sitting-room with various kinds of rich carpets and sat down to await who should come.

And behold, the Kazi was the first to appear, devancing the rest, and when she saw him, she rose to her feet and kissed the ground before him; then, taking him by the hand, made him sit down by her on the couch and lay with him and fell to jesting and toying with him. By and by, he would have her do his desire, but she said, "O my lord, doff thy clothes and turband and assume this yellow cassock and this head-kerchief, whilst I bring thee meat and drink; and after thou shalt win thy will." So saying, she took his clothes and turband and clad him in the cassock and the kerchief; but hardly had she done this, when lo! there came a knocking at the door. Asked he, "Who is that rapping at the door?" and she answered, "My husband." Quoth the Kazi, "What is to be done, and where shall I go?" Quoth she, "Fear nothing, I will hide thee in this cabinet;" and he, "Do as seemeth good to thee." So she took him by the hand and pushing him into the lowest compartment, locked the door upon him. Then she went to the house-door, where she found the Wali; so she bussed ground before him and taking his hand brought him into the saloon, where she made him sit down and said to him, "O my lord, this house is thy house; this place is thy place, and I am thy handmaid: thou shalt pass all this day with me; wherefore do thou doff thy clothes and don this red gown, for it is a sleeping gown." So she took away his clothes and made him assume the red gown and set on his head an old patched rag she had by her; after which she sat by him on the divan and she sported with him while he toyed with her awhile, till he put out his hand to her.

Whereupon she said to him, "O our lord, this day is thy day and none shall share in it with thee; but first, of thy favour and benevolence, write me an order for my brother's release from gaol that my heart may be at ease." Quoth he, "Hearkening and obedience: on my head and eyes be it!"; and wrote a letter to his treasurer, saying:—"As soon as this communication shall reach thee, do thou set such an one free, without stay or delay; neither answer the bearer a word." Then he sealed it and she took it from him, after which she began to toy again with him on the divan when, behold, some one knocked at the door. He asked, "Who is that?" and she answered, "My husband." "What shall I do?" said he, and she, "Enter this cabinet, till I send him away and return to thee." So she clapped him into the second compartment from the bottom and padlocked the door on him; and meanwhile the Kazi heard all they said. Then she went to the house-door and opened it, whereupon lo! the Wazir entered. She bussed the ground before

him and received him with all honour and worship, saying, "O my lord, thou exaltest us by thy coming to our house; Allah never deprive us of the light of thy countenance!" Then she seated him on the divan and said to him, "O my lord, doff thy heavy dress and turband and don these lighter vestments." So he put off his clothes and turband and she clad him in a blue cassock and a tall red bonnet, and said to him, "Erst thy garb was that of the Wazirate; so leave it to its own time and don this light gown, which is better fitted for carousing and making merry and sleep."

Thereupon she began to play with him and he with her, and he would have done his desire of her; but she put him off, saying, "O my lord, this shall not fail us." As they were talking there came a knocking at the door, and the Wazir asked her, "Who is that?": to which she answered, "My husband." Quoth he, "What is to be done?" Quoth she, "Enter this cabinet, till I get rid of him and come back to thee and fear thou nothing." So she put him in the third compartment and locked the door on him, after which she went out and opened the house-door when lo and behold! in came the King. As soon as she saw him she kissed ground before him, and taking him by the hand, led him into the saloon and seated him on the divan at the upper end. Then said she to him, "Verily, O King, thou dost us high honour, and if we brought thee to gift the world and all that therein is, it would not be worth a single one of thy steps us-wards."

And when he had taken his seat upon the divan she said, "Give me leave to speak one word." "Say what thou wilt," answered he, and she said, "O my lord, take thine ease and doff thy dress and turband." Now his clothes were worth a thousand dinars; and when he put them off she clad him in a patched gown, worth at the very most ten dirhams, and fell to talking and jesting with him; all this while the folk in the cabinet hearing everything that passed, but not daring to say a word.

Presently, the King put his hand to her neck and sought to do his desire of her; when she said, "This thing shall not fail us, but I had first promised myself to entertain thee in this sitting-chamber, and I have that which shall content thee." Now as they were speaking, some one knocked at the door and he asked her, "Who is that?" "My husband," answered she, and he, "Make him go away of his own good will, or I will fare forth to him and send him away perforce." Replied she, "Nay, O my lord, have patience till I send him away by my skilful contrivance." "And I, how shall I do!" enquired the King; whereupon she took him by the hand and making him enter the fourth compartment of the cabinet, locked it upon him. Then she went out and opened the house door when behold, the carpenter entered and saluted her. Quoth she, "What manner of thing is this cabinet thou hast made me?" "What aileth it, O my lady?" asked he, and she answered, "The top compartment is too strait." Rejoined he, "Not so;" and she, "Go in thyself and see; it is not wide enough for thee." Quoth he, "It is wide enough for four," and entered the fifth compartment, whereupon she locked the door on him.

Then she took the letter of the Chief

of Police and carried it to the treasurer who, having read and understood it, kissed it and delivered her lover to her. She told him all she had done and he said, "And how shall we act now?" She answered, "We will remove hence to another city, for after this work there is no tarrying for us here." So the twain packed up what goods they had and, loading them on camels, set out forthright for another city. Meanwhile, the five abode each in his compartment of the cabinet without eating or drinking three whole days, during which time they held their water until at last the carpenter could retain his no longer; so he staled on the King and the King on the Wazir, and the Wazir on the Wali and the Wali on the Kazi; whereupon the Judge cried out and said, "What nastiness is this? Doth not what strait we are in suffice us, but you must make water upon us?" The Chief of Police recognised the Kazi's voice and answered, saying aloud, "Allah increase thy reward, O Kazi!" And when the Kazi heard him, he knew him for the Wali. Then the Chief of Police lifted up his voice and said, "What means this nastiness?" and the Wazir answered, saying, "Allah increase thy reward, O Wali!" whereupon he knew him to be the Minister. Then the Wazir lifted up his voice and said, "What means this nastiness?" But when the King heard and recognised his Minister's voice, he held his peace and concealed his affair. Then said the Wazir, "May God damn this woman for her dealing with us! She hath brought hither all the Chief Officers of the state, except the King." Quoth the King, "Hold your peace, for I was the first to fall into the toils of this lewd strumpet." Whereat cried the carpenter, "And I, what have I done? I made her a cabinet for four gold pieces, and when I came to seek my hire, she tricked me into entering this compartment and locked the door on me." And they fell to talking with one another, diverting the King and doing away his chagrin. Presently the neighbours came up to the house and, seeing it deserted, said one to other, "But yesterday our neighbor, the wife of such an one, was in it; but now no sound is to be heard therein nor is soul to be seen. Let us break open the doors and see how the case stands, lest it come to the ears of the Wali or the King and we be cast into prison and regret not doing this thing before."

So they broke open the doors and entered the saloon, where they saw a large wooden cabinet and heard men within groaning for hunger and thirst. Then said one of them, "Is there a Jinni in this cabinet?" and his fellow, "Let us heap fuel about it and burn it with fire." When the Kazi heard this, he bawled out to them, "Do it not!"

And they said to one another, "Verily the Jinn make believe to be mortals and speak with men's voices." Therepon the Kazi repeated somewhat of the Sublime Koran and said to the neighbours, "Draw near to the cabinet wherein we are." So they drew near, and he said, "I am so and so the Kazi, and ye are such an one and such an one, and we are here a company." Quoth the neighbours, "Who brought you here?" And he told them the whole case from beginning to end. Then they fetched a carpenter, who opened the five doors

and let out Kazi, Wazir, Wali, King and carpenter in their queer disguises; and each, when he saw how the others were accoutred, fell a-laughing at them. Now she had taken away all their clothes; so every one of them sent to his people for fresh clothes and put them on and went out, covering himself therewith from the sight of the folk. And such was the trick of this woman.

Abduction of Agnes

"SHUT the door, Margery, my dear," said her old grandfather, "and bolt it too very carefully. Our young gentlemen students are about to jubilate in the streets to-night, as neighbour Schwertfeger informs me, and it may be better for quiet people who occupy the ground floor, like us, to be something upon our guard. Meanwhile I will look to the window-shutters; it is already getting quite dark, and it is high time to light a candle."

"But how will our old lodger find his way in, then, grandfather?" said the little maiden; "you know he is still out among the pine-trees, and wandering about the old heathen monuments and tombs."

"Let him rummage there as long as he pleases, child; we cannot hinder him. And he may please, likewise, to wait awhile before the door when he comes; for, to say the truth, I do not like his ways at all, and I am sorry that I ever promised the professor, on taking the house, not to turn the strange lodger out of doors."

"Oh, grandfather! it was surely hard enough upon poor Mr. Professor to be obliged to leave his nice family house, all owing to his wicked creditors; and it vexes me to think of it. For Mr. Professor always looks so kind and pleasant, and not so old as the other professors; then he can tell so many fine stories of bygone times, which, though they almost make one's hair stand on end, are very pretty to hear. And as to the strange lodger, he is, perhaps, much better in his heart than he sometimes appears to me."

"Maybe so, child; but I wish I had stayed in my own little house. Whenever I go past it, I feel a kind of sinking at my heart; it was much pleasanter there."

"Yet I think you used to complain and groan more there than you do here, grandfather."

"How can you make that our, Margery? You know I only removed just to please good Mr. Professor. I wish from my heart he had continued to live here instead of us; at all events, he would have paid no house-rent! yet he would not listen to the idea for a moment. But now, my dear, let us think of the door; see that it is made quite fast."

Little Margery did as her grandfather bade her: she turned the key three times in the lock, slipped the bolts as far as they would go, and then both seated themselves with a feeling of quiet and security snugly round their little hearth.

"Shall I go on reading where I left off, gran-gran?" said the pretty child,

with a smile. The good-natured old man nodded assent, at the same time taking out of his portfolio his lead pencil, paper, and ruler, at his accustomed hour, in order to draw designs, which he afterwards exhibited for the instruction of the young artizans, as head master of the joiners' trade. For the same reason he kept but little company, living quite retired, attended only by a single maid-servant and his little granddaughter.

She had, by this time, seated herself opposite to him, began to turn over the leaves of a huge richly-bound folio in parchment, and proceeded to read as follows:

"And it likewise once happened in the famed city of the sea, at Venice, that a gondolier, whose occupation there is to row backwards and forwards in boats, hung with black, upon the canals, had taken into his service a stranger, for his rower, of uncommon size and strength. Neither the gondolier, nor any one else, could learn whence the lusty varlet had last come, nor where was his native place. Some there were, more deeply read, who, observing that this huge hireling was deprived of the use of speech, though he could drink well and hail passengers politely enough, imagined that he must be some great animal matamorphosed through the wondrous power of some sorcerer into the human shape, and that, from his strength and docility, he was most likely formed out of an elephant.

"Be that, however, as it may, the gondolier was well satisfied with his journeyman, who, if he devoured a good deal of food, also went through as much labour; and he troubled his head very little with inquiring into his descent and country, leaving all such conjectures to the solution of the learned.

"In this proceeding, however, he could not be justified, as no Christian master and householder ought to engage any servants whose faith, good character, and conduct are not sufficiently known to him, since he must remain accountable both to God and man for the demeanour of such domestics or other hired persons."

Here the old man sighed deeply, and leaned down his head, white with age, upon his hand. Margery stopped and looked at him with surprise. He then recovered himself, and forcing a smile, observed, "Well, my love, read on; I want nothing. I was only thinking how much better it had been, if—but go on, Margery, my dear." And Margery thus proceeded:

"About the same period there happened to pass that way a famous necromancer, who applied to the said gondolier for three able-bodied boatmen, in order to make a long and quick passage by night. The gondolier thought he was rendering him a great service by letting him have his dumb rower for one of the hands, which he calculated at the rate of five others. This he seemed to show by the speed with which his gondola began to skim the waves. But just at midnight there was heard, from the vicinity of the route it was then going, a most hideous uproar, in which the voice of the great sorcerer was most loud, and resounded far over the waters. A few of the boldest young men hastened with torches and arms towards the spot. Soon they saw the form of the huge rower conspicuous on the deck, engaged in sinking his own vessel, and stamping it deeper and

deeper into the waves below; at the same time he seemed to be playing at ball with the sorcerer, and at a single blow struck off his head, after which boat and boatman both sank together into the deep.

"On the following morning the shattered limbs of the necromancer were found scattered in different places, washed up by the waves. What appeared still more remarkable was the discovery of a dead elephant lying, apparently drowned, upon the sea-shore a few miles distant from the city. But whence the strange monster could have been brought, or by what means, nc one knew.

"It was surmised, however, by many, that the same necromancer had, by his infernal art, metamorphosed the huge animal into the human form, and employed it in this way, at Venice, for the purpose of effecting some of his diabolical schemes; that at this time he must for once have miscalculated the exact hour and planet under which he was operating; and had, unluckily for himself, been deceived by the evil spirits with whom he was tampering, so that in ascending the gondola he did not even recognize the enchanted beast, as oftentimes, indeed, happens to such practitioners in the black arts before attaining their end. Others again wished to infer that the magician had only assumed the strange ancient-looking form in which he appeared, and was in reality a very handsome young man, deeply smitten with a passion for the lovely consort of the Doge. That moreover he had sent the huge elephantine rower before him, in order to assist in the abduction of the noble duchess, or at all events to stir up some wild insurrection in the city, and in the state council of the Republic, favourable to his views. As it has been stated, however, he in this instance fell a victim to his own want of foresight in directing the potency of his own fatal arts.

"Hence we may learn——"

Just at these words Margery was interrupted by a tremendous bustle in the street. She cast an anxious glance towards the windows, and at length whispered, "Ah, grandfather! I fear the young gentlemen students are even more wild than usual to-day!"

"It is only according to custom," said the old man, with a smile; "and birds of one feather will flock together, as the saying goes. So give no more heed to it, love, than to the blustering of a storm towards spring, and go on quietly with the book."

Margery was once more applying herself with all diligence to the exact line and word, when suddenly there came three such thundering blows against the window-shutters, that the fine old vellum book slipped out of her hand, and she hid her face in the cushion of the armchair, which rattled, along with all the furniture in the room.

But not so the worthy head master; for hastening close under the window, he exclaimed, in the same strong clear tone in which he gave the word of command, when serving *à la militaire* in his youth, "Who has the boldness to disturb a free citizen in his own house? Let the wanton young blade give his name from the outside, and we shall soon see if he be as valiant as he would make us believe. As to this house, let him know it is the residence of Head Master Rhenfried—Philibert Rhenfried, President of the Honourable Joiners'

Company, belonging to this town and country. What say ye?"

A low anxious wailing was heard on the outside, very strongly distinguished through all the violent mirth and uproar of the collegians, and gradually dying away along with the same in the distance.

"What was that?" inquired both the grandfather and the child at the same moment, with a look of surprise.

The students meanwhile made a fresh movement, and formed in a grand square in the mark. Torches were seen waving in the air, mingled with no few cudgels, and it is said that a number were observed to be sharpening their hangers upon the stones. Apparently they had pronounced their *pereat* upon many an unlucky professor's pate, and in particular upon his who had so greatly won little Margaret's regard. For though he was accustomed to banter in a friendly way with some of these wild spirits of the gown, he was extremely bitter and unrelenting in cases of excessive wickedness and extravagance on their part, inasmuch that between the two they hardly knew in which way to deal with him. However, they were in hopes, at least, of terrifying him out of the vexatious censorship which he had assumed, and they were the more emboldened by the efforts of a new collegian, named Marcellin, who had been residing during some weeks, while on a tour, in the town, and ingratiated himself extremely with the whole fraternity by his superior courage and dexterity. Though a good deal older than the usual run of them, he it was who schemed and executed the most mad and juvenile tricks, while at the same time he won equal admiration by his superior abilities and acquirements. He had also conceived a great dislike to poor Margery's favourite, the Professor Nordenholm; hated to hear him named; could never be prevailed upon to call on him as on the other professors, and felt infinitely delighted at the idea of beholding the rod which was now hanging over him descend *in terrorem* upon his professional shoulders.

Their whole force marched forthwith until they formed a junction before the said Nordenholm's house; and there they set up a shout for Marcellin! Marcellin! echoed from a hundred voices; but it was in vain; no Marcellin made his appearance.

At length he was seen sinking quite pale and breathless, with difficulty supporting himself upon his sword-stick, out of the crowd about him. Some of the senior natives approached him with looks of eager and terrific inquiry, while the light of their torches glared strangely upon his livid and distorted features. "What!" cried he, scornfully, as they gathered round him, "do you think this either well-bred or right to dog me in so scandalous a style to the very steps of a strange old master joiner, one whom I may not so much as call by name? and would you delude me by maintaining that this is the family house of the hated Professor Nordenholm?"

"Of a truth," replied one of the students, in no good-humoured tone, "the head master resides in Nordenholm's family house. But who, as you so outrageously insist, has offered to dog your steps thither? and, moreover, how happen you to know anything respecting Nordenholm's residence? you who de-

tested to hear him named, and gave yourself no sort of concern about him. All this appears to me somewhat strange."

Marcellin's pride took the alarm, but at the word "strange," he seemed greatly confused, and replied in a hurried, unconnected manner. This only plunged both parties deeper into the brawl, and shortly, in his excessive choler, he challenged two of the natives to meet him with sword and pistols on the ensuing morning.

After fierce words on both sides, they separated, and went in different directions without attempting to resume any of their former schemes, and without a single *pereat* executed on any professional head.

Nordenholm watched their retreat through his half-closed windows barricaded with huge tomes, and burst into bitter laughter, as he recalled to mind a similar convulsion, which was years before followed by the loss of his sweetest earthly enjoyments.

Meanwhile the head master and Margaret had ceased to read, and were sitting nearer each other quite still and contemplative.

"No, read no more to-night, child," said the old man, "the evening seems to have set in so strangely; and then the history you began to read was so very extraordinary, who knows but still more wild and absurd accounts may follow it? Better bring your spinning-wheel to the table, and then if you should happen to call to mind one of your prettiest ditties, sing it for me, my dear."

Margery smiled and nodded her head, at the same time beginning to spin in right earnest; but no pretty song seemed to rise up in her trembling little heart. She seemed rather to anticipate from her looks, though the streets were again quiet, that there was yet something strangely unusual and dismal in the approaching night that weighed heavier and heavier on her mind. Nor were her forebodings felt without reason, for just then they heard heavy footsteps pacing backwards and forwards in the room above them, the same which was occupied by the old lodger, who had not yet returned home, and of which he always carried the key about with him, being extremely jealous of any one entering it in his absence. At times, too, they thought they heard a fearful sobbing and sighing, almost like that of a man dying of great pain. Margaret raised up her hands, as if directing her grandfather to the spot, but said not a word, while he went and took down his old broadsword hanging on the wall, prayed a few moments within himself, and lastly went towards the door.

"Dearest grandfather, my own best grandpapa," whispered Margaret, "take me with you, then! for whatever terrible there may be, it cannot be half so agonizing as I should imagine, were I to be left here in the little study by myself—all alone, with such dreadful thoughts. Oh, yes, you must take me along with you!"

And after a few moments, while the old man had been engaged in trimming the lamp for his lantern, and putting out the candle which they were before burning, he motioned to the timid girl to accompany him, and lighted her on the way. But she clung fast to him, and they began to ascend the stairs together. As they proceeded up the narrow stone steps and along the creaking

landing, they continued to hear more plainly the same strange moaning and whimpering from the lodger's chamber. They were now standing before the door, and could perceive there was a light burning within, apparent through the keyhole. "In God's name," cried old Master Rhenfried, "what kind of being is within there, and in what manner engaged?"

The door flew suddenly open, wide open, and "Huzzah! halloh! who disturbs, who affrights me?" was repeated from a voice within, so horribly wild and mad, that Master Rhenfried involuntarily stepped back, and the child fell upon her knees, muttering her prayers, behind him.

In the middle of the chamber stood arrayed in a blood-red mantle the strange lodger, and he trembled greatly. After a short pause, he said in a low hollow voice, "See! take your rent for one half-year. It is upon the table; there, take it away, for it fell due the week before."

"I shall not receive it to-day for all that," replied the old master, with a firmly recovered and determined tone of voice; "but I both will and must know what it is that so dreadfully agitates you, and by what means you gained access into my fast-locked and bolted dwelling?"

"What I moan, and what I sigh for," half sobbed and laughed the offended lodger, "eh! Surely the spirits that haunt the gallows have a right to do that; and why not he who regularly and orderly pays for his own lodging? How did I gain access here, you say?—Eh! what kind of questions are these?—why, the house door was standing wide open when I came; upon my honour, I can assure you, nevertheless, that I remarked nothing else."

"For all that," said Master Rhenfried, "I have earnestly to entreat of you to leave these lodgings to-morrow morning, for truly I am not accustomed to live with people whose doors fly off their hinges when they just approach them; I will never live with them any more."

"But I do not happen to be of the same opinion," said the strange lodger, in a contemptuous tone. "I laugh at the idea of going out; you know you are bound over to the former landlord to suffer me to remain. So there is your rent, pick it up, it is all there."

The old master, glancing sideways at the glittering gold, observed, "Hand to hand, I can receive nothing from you besides; I see you have brought such curious old doubloons, all marked Venice, and I know not what date they may bear. I believe too I have said beforetime that I am no exchange broker, and have no dealings in strange obsolete coins, though I were to gain ten times the amount by them."

"Here, however," cried the lodger, laughing, "are no Venetian doubloons. They are old Saxon gold coins, which your forefathers have been acquainted with these thousand years. And if you sottish folk no longer prize them, yet the former master here, the wonderfully wise Nordenholm, may surely contrive to exchange them. Now, pray leave me alone, or take what is due to you!"

And as old Master Rhenfried was turning reluctantly away, the strange lodger slammed-to the door with such violence as to blow out their light. Slowly and sad did the grandfather and daughter descend the stairs and along

the landing, which sounded dismally to their footsteps, until they again reached the snug little study, and felt as if a burden were suddenly removed from their minds. They lighted and trimmed their lamp, and Master Rhenfried shouted aloud for the maid-servant, to go instantly with a message for Professor Nordenholm, entreating him to come thither without loss of time. Should he be gone to rest, he must nevertheless get up, and hasten as fast as possible to consider of some very important business.

In a short while the professor made his appearance, pale and terrified. "You have sent for me on account of the lodger—is it not?" he inquired in a low voice. "My God! I might well think how it would be! But let our pretty little Margaret go to bed. I have much strange matter for your private ear, and our conference may be prolonged far beyond midnight."

The head master expressed his assent, and bade the servant go along with Margaret, and both retire to rest. Margery looked a little anxiously round her, but observing that her good old grandfather, as well as the professor, was going to keep watch, she thought it would be better to try and forget her fears in sleep, and, without a word, she bade them both a sweet good night. Soon she fell into a soft slumber, and lost all recollection of the fearful occurrences of that dismal night: it had no longer power over her gentle spirit, for the smile that played upon her lips betokened innocent and angelic rest.

Meanwhile the professor and Master Rhenfried were in earnest communion together, seated near one another at the little round table. After a long pause, the former in a low and fearful tone thus resumed the discourse: "I ought in the outset, my dear Rhenfried, to remind you of a great calamity which happened to you, though I am also aware that so singular a period of your excellent life should, if possible, be wrapped in an impenetrable veil of oblivion; but it is all of no use now. I loved your lost daughter who disappeared ten years ago, and if she did not return my affection, there was a time when she seemed to receive it with a degree of sweet complacency and friendship. The cause of the beloved girl's loss, so inexpressibly bitter to my feelings, remains still as unaccountable to me as I suppose it yet does to you."

The old man made a sign for him to say no more, and seemed to be absorbed in deep meditation within himself. At length he said, "No; that dreadful occurrence is not such a complete mystery as you seem to think, though more severely felt, my dear sir, than any similar affliction that perhaps ever befell me. Yet, when I take all into consideration—your known integrity, your present sincerity, your kind attachment to my granddaughter, and the confidence she seems to feel in you—I feel I can no longer withhold mine; I feel that you fully merit it, and I will state every circumstance I know relating to the fate of my poor unfortunate girl.

"It may now be rather more than twelve years ago when there came to my house, where till then I had resided so quietly and pleasantly with my little girls,—there came, I say, one day, a handsome young man who expressed a wish to see my workshop, and after examining my models, &c., very attentively, he began to talk about an ap-

prenticeship. As you may imagine, I at first treated the matter as mere jest, and then rejected it as a piece of uncalled-for mockery on his part, warmly entreating him not to think of amusing himself at my expense. Still the young gentleman insisted he intended neither jest nor insult; he was much attached to turning and joiners' work of all kinds, and he had resolved to become acquainted with it in all its branches thoroughly and upon principle, under the care and instructions of a skilful master. He then hoped he had succeeded, and he was resolved, with my permission, never to relinquish his design until he had made himself fairly master of all that it was in my power to teach. Like a madman as I was, I gave my consent, though I knew literally nothing either who he was or whence he came; not even whether he had any testimonials with him. I showed him everything in my shop; drew up an agreement, as if the devil possessed me; and called him, at his own request, by the name of Ludibert Wendelstern." "Ludibert!" said Nordenholm mournfully. "Alas, there is a Ludibert occurs likewise in my own history. But go on! go on! dear master. Was he, then, the man who deprived you of your angelic daughter?"

"He! he! no other on earth!" replied the old man, his face growing darker and darker as he spoke. "Right well did the cunning seducer know how to apply himself to my noble art; never had I an apprentice half so skilful, for he possessed fine talents, and in more branches than one. He could play the flute beautifully, and could sing as well; while with his rapier he was a perfect master."

Nordenholm earnestly signified his assent, and the old man continued, without noticing it:

"During our leisure hours he amused himself with instructing the rest of the apprentices and their companions in the noble science of defence, and having myself been a soldier, fond of the sword exercise, it afforded me no slight pleasure to witness their feats with the foil. On all occasions the young master exhibited the greatest politeness and good breeding in his conduct, and daily established himself more firmly in my good graces. This continued for the space of two years, when suddenly the scales fell from my deluded eyes, and I stood lost in astonishment and dismay. The young students had engaged in a similar piece of work to that we have witnessed this evening; and one of those who returned no more that night to supper, and was never afterwards seen, was Ludibert Wendelstern. On the ensuing morning I found a paper lying in my daughter Agnes' chamber, but she was gone—gone for ever."

The old man here rose, and unlocking a small cupboard, took out two letters, which he handed to the professor, who, recognizing the hand of his beloved Agnes, began to read, though almost blinded by the tears that came into his eyes.

"A happy destiny calls me away from you, my dear father; but I know you would never have yielded me your consent. Farewell, then, and take comfort; for I feel quite assured we shall soon meet again, when you will congratulate me a thousand thousand times on the happiness which will soon be mine."

"That," said the old master, "was indeed a poor prophecy," and he drew his hand across his eyes, as if in pain: "she was far too confident, and that ever brings failure and disappointment along with it, for wretched mortals such as we are. There is only one thing certain, but that is quite certain; wherefore the Lord be praised."

He took his cap from his reverend white head, held it between his folded hands, and prayed within himself. Afterwards he continued, with more cheerful resignation, "During four years I could learn nothing regarding her; but at the expiration of that period, one fine morning, an infant of about four years old was found wrapped delicately up, and laid at my door. It was Margaret, and the following note was found attached to its arm, which I will endeavour to read to you:

" 'I have been lawfully united at the altar with my beloved Ludibert; and the sweet pledge of our affection, which I herewith commit to your care, was, I assure you, by all that is holy, born in honourable wedlock. If you would not wish to curse and to kill me, I beseech you to preserve the dear infant for me until I come to claim her; till when her existence must remain a mystery. My noble consort maintains me in great wealth and splendour; yet, oh! best and dearest father, you cannot believe what abundance of wishful tears I shed—what sighs I pour, once more to cross our sweet home's threshold; and which I am fondly trusting soon to do. Oh, think often of your absent, but faithful, fondly-loving 'Agnes.'

"In the basket that contained the child was a large sum of gold and silver, with precious stones. This, however, I deposited as the subscription of some stranger for the use of St. Ursula's hospital. But I deliberated not a moment in announcing that the young child was my granddaughter, the offspring of the marriage of my daughter with the stranger. And now, God be praised, our good city is pleased to give full credit to any assertion from the lips of head master Philibert Rhenfried: so far my good name helped me, and I troubled myself no further with any needless inquiries. So at all events my poor Agnes has not been the occasion of adding the sin of lying to the account of her aged father's soul. I have brought up her little girl to the best of my knowledge of what is good and right, and so by Heaven's mercy she has gone on improving, doubtless under its wise dispensations, to the fulfilment of God's purposes here below."

Nordenholm here pressed the old man's hand, and, leaning down his head, wept bitterly. After a long sad pause he then said, "Alas! my good master, I see how much you suffer; but your sufferings are not barbed with the stings of guilt, therefore do you bear them freely and boldly. But woe alas! I feel no sweet confidence in the same freedom. I have my misgivings, though I have done nothing dreadful to reproach myself with. There is something weighs at my heart, which seems to grow heavier and heavier as the night proceeds. The cause of this first arose on occasion of the forementioned festival, when I was young and happy, alas! doubly happy, for I then flattered myself with delightful hopes of winning

your daughter's love, and came along with other students to enjoy ourselves here.

"After our rounds, we held a jubilee in a grand decorated hall, where we were joined by a mask arrayed in very splendid apparel. We had once, and only once, before observed the same man make his appearance, and concluded that he was one of our merry company who had some especial piece of mirth in view. This time the unknown made his obeisance, and with very humble voice petitioned for leave to propose a question for the consideration of our society. Receiving our unanimous consent, he began: 'It is a question of honour and of duty:—whether a lover have a right to carry off his beloved when he is persuaded that he can maintain her in all due and lawful honour and worthiness, and is equally persuaded that her happiness and his own can be accomplished by no other means.' He paused; and the voices on both sides rose loud on the ear, though most were perceptibly in favour of a mad assent to such a proposition; many of the students being pretty well heated with wine, and full of adventurous spirit, eager for exploits. I, even I! good master, joined in the wild and wicked votes that carried the question; but it was the first truly blameable act of my life. Even now within this last half hour I have heard from your own lips how very lamentably I may have assisted by such a vote, by supporting such a proposal, in striking at my own sweetest hopes of happiness on earth."

He hid his face in his hands and was silent. The old master laid his hand gently upon his bowed head, and while he pronounced his forgiveness, also gave his blessing: his repentance was enough. Nordenholm then rose with renewed hope and strength, and thus continued:

"It seemed, at the same moment, as if I was carried away by a strange impulse of wilful rioting and folly, quite foreign to my usual calm and moderate feelings of enjoyment on such occasions. It appeared as if I no longer recognized myself; I wished to be foremost in the mad career we were pursuing; everywhere ambitious to give a spur to the follies of the hour; and in all companies striving to lead the revels, in singing, dancing, drinking or rioting. Shortly I heard reports that the stranger was exerting himself very strenuously among our colleagues to obtain some of the most bold and adventurous hands for the purpose of carrying into effect the identical exploit which had gained our unanimous applause, and that he spared no powers of oratory, no influence, to gain his point. My rude and boisterous mirth seemed to offend his more genteel and delicate bearing; and soon we had words together. Then he tore the mask from his face, and we beheld a perfectly strange but beautiful youth, with a smile of scorn upon his features, which could not, however, impair their noble symmetry and lively expression. 'My name is Ludibert,' he cried, approaching me nearer; 'for that of my family, it is noble, princely; but I shall not mention it to you. Enough that I now cite you to appear and decide our difference in honourable combat: enough that I so far condescend.'

"The challenge was as quickly received; everything was prepared; I met him with perfect ease and confidence, for I was the unrivalled master of our

ring; and stripped to our shirts, with single rapiers, we set to. Almost at the first pass I was overpowered by the irresistible vigour of my rival's arm: I could not even stand my guard; but was instantly struck senseless and bleeding to the ground, a part of his weapon sticking in my breast.

"Many weeks afterwards, on my first return to consciousness, my first inquiries were respecting Agnes, and the tale of her abduction then saluted my ears. I could learn nothing of the time and place, while my ideas on the subject were so mingled with the occurrences of that dreadful night, that I could only feel remorse for the mad disposition which I had indulged, and confess myself unworthy of the happiness which once appeared in store for me.

"Yet alas! good sir, my cup was not yet full. There was a favourite subject, I don't much like to mention, which I once pursued for the sake of poetical embellishment—the research after strange old charms, and other magical influences; and this my despair respecting the fate of Agnes now led me to employ, for the purpose of discovering whither the beloved girl had disappeared. Ah, my worthy master! fix not your eye so sternly, so reproachfully upon me, much less turn away your sympathy from my sorrows; for know, God be praised, I have never either denied or misapplied what is holy by any investigation or pursuit of mine." At the same time he stretched out his right hand in token of such assurance, which the good master with a look of compassion accepted, and motioned to him to proceed; as he did in the following words:

"I knew that it has been conceived possible, through a fit conjunction of times and circumstances, so to fabricate a magical mirror that it shall retain the moon's beams in such a manner as to exhibit by secret reflection on the surface everything that passes upon the earth's sphere in succession, according as such magic mirror shall be directed and applied. This wonderful piece of mechanism I succeeded with infinite labour and great expense in procuring; and once in the garden of this your, but formerly my house, I began, when the moon was shining clear in the heavens, and at the full, about the eleventh hour of night, to try my secret experiment. That my own apparition would be seen, in case my image fell upon my glass, seen even from the farthest corner of the earth, I was well aware; but my whole soul was so intent upon learning the fate and residence of Agnes, that I could dwell upon nothing else.

"It now seemed as if some assistant being were directing my hand in the motions of the mirror, which fortunately had been placed aright. At first only small strange forms cast their reflections over the surface of the mirror; when at length, in the direction of the south, there arose one so enchantingly sweet and lovely before my eyes!—Oh. my good master! father! she sat looking so beautiful and angelic, amidst the blooming orange bowers, in the soft moonlight which shed its beams upon the lofty pines that crowned the heights above——"

"I see your eyes sparkle with delight," interrupted the old man, in a tone of displeasure; "you ought rather to take shame and sorrow to yourself, for having dared to dabble in any for-

bidden species of witchcraft, than to display the least feeling of exultation. Let me hear you describe what follows with a becoming degree of seriousness and regret. What further appeared?"

With the humility of a repentant offender, the professor cast his eyes upon the ground, and in a lower tone said, "It was indeed Agnes! she was splendidly attired, and was again seen walking by moonlight, leaning on Ludibert's arm. I concealed my features cautiously, at a distance, to prevent them from falling upon the mirror. Next, you yourself, sir, suddenly appeared in the garden; and on the mirror's surface the pale and sorrowful cast of your features was plainly visible. Seized with alarm, lest you too should catch sight of Agnes, I ran to the glass, beheld my own distorted features reflected there; and bursting into a thousand fragments, the wonderful instrument fell from my trembling grasp."

"I know it all, as well as if it happened to-day," said the white-headed Rhenfried; "yet amidst all the images that floated before my eyes I could distinguish no one; clouds of heart-sprung tears concealed them from view. For at that time I had not fully resigned myself to the will of God: I lay weeping upon my bed, but suddenly I heard a light whispering as if it had said in my ear, 'Rise, unhappy father; in Nordenholm's house it is known what is become of thy daughter.' I obeyed, and doubtless it was no good spirit which had so whispered me in my chamber. Then when I came and found you labouring under such excessive terror, you know well that I retired without speaking a single word, and never more alluded to the appalling and mysterious subject. Long afterwards, however, a heavy weight seemed to oppress my soul; from which you may learn, my poor deluded friend, how very critical and dangerous a pursuit it is, that can involve in its forbidden operations even the peace of the innocent, who would willingly resist its incantations to their last breath."

Meanwhile they again began to hear the voice of the strange lodger above stairs, mingled with sobs and sighs and wild fierce laughter, even louder than before.

"Good God!" cried the professor in much alarm; "suppose the horrid noises were to awaken the child!" Already he had raised his hand with threatening gesture towards the room above; when instantly checking himself, he sank down upon his knees and said, "Help! help me to pray, good master! that will avail us much better here."

Both then prayed, and all grew still! When they had again seated themselves at the table, the old master first spoke.

"Assuredly, Mr. Professor, you must have disturbed my mind by some other means besides those used with the magical mirror. You had better at once speak boldly out, and confess how it is that this strange unhappy lodger continues here; he is in some way connected with your proceedings."

"So indeed it is," replied Nordenholm. "For having learned that my Agnes was to be sought for somewhere in the south, I instantly collected the scattered remnants of my fortune, in order to seek her in those parts. The better to further my views, and gain access to various classes of society, I assumed the title of Doctor and Professor. While I was absent, you were

presented with little Margaret, whom you found at your own door; but it was my fate, alas! to encounter many less fair and pleasing sights, cruel and frightful adventures, which bore me, like a whirlpool, into the gulf.

"I had journeyed as far as the city of Venice. There I heard mention of a certain sorcerer, who knew how to unravel all mysteries upon earth, and as I found all my inquiries after my lost Agnes were fruitless, I formed an acquaintance with him; and he is the very same strange being whom we just now heard crying out and lamenting over our heads. On consulting him he declared that he must have some fixed abode, where he might prepare his conjurations, and that having first provided him with a floor in my own house, he would attend to my wishes. When he got possession, however, he did not keep his word, pretending that the image of Agnes appeared only dimly floating before his eyes. Moreover, I heard it currently reported at Venice that this was merely the apparition of a real sorcerer who had flourished centuries ago, and owing to some want of foresight in his art had fallen a sudden victim, and never since been enabled to enjoy the least repose."

"Just Heavens! that I feared," exclaimed Rhenfried. "Margaret has this very evening read me his dreadful history aloud! Come what may, however, no time is to be lost; we must rid the house of him, at all events." As he had said this, the old master proceeded once more to trim his lantern, took his good sword under his arm, and strode boldly out of the room. Nordenholm ventured not to oppose him, but followed at a distance, trembling with doubt and terror, up the steps and along the sounding staircase, till they reached the strange lodger's room.

The grey-headed host knocked smartly at the door; it began to open very slowly, but not as if moved by a human hand; for the fearful guest was seated quite at the other end of the chamber, upon the ground, wrapped in a red mantle; several household implements scattered round him, and a dull blue fire flickering and casting its fitful shadows upon the opposite walls.

The strange lodger cast a keen glance at the intruders, with a smile of scorn upon his lips; and as they continued to gaze upon him, more fierce and fiery glances shot from his hollow eyes.

"Give yourselves no trouble," he shouted in a hollow voice; "I well know your object, and what you want here; but nothing will come of it, at least during your lives; and it is a question even whether Master Philibert's grandchildren will make me quit. For I am of a very tenacious nature, and apt to tarry long at a place."

The professor here sighed deeply from the bottom of his soul. The Red Mantle tried to force a laugh, but in this he could not rightly succeed; though he said in triumph, "One of you, I well know, is burdened with heavy thoughts. Of that at least I am certain!"

"For me," replied old Master Philibert, very calmly,—"for me, I feel still more certain that I am not the person. Yea! and I know something yet more: that you will not venture to stay in this house another quarter of an hour; for I hereby conjure you, in pure and lively faith, with the fear of God before my eyes, confiding in Him only, to depart

from hence out of this house, and never to cross its threshold more. What is more, you shall decamp forthwith, secretly and quietly, without offering to disturb a single Christian soul within these walls, without any knocking, rumbling, or roaring of any kind. Now!—avaunt!—are you going? or will you have me appeal to more strong and terrible adjurations, in the name of the Lord? Will you wait and rue your folly, or be gone?" At these words, with quick, horrible, and threatening gestures, the lodger gathered up his strange furniture, and hiding them under his red mantle, he hastened towards the door, fiercely murmuring as he went by, "Thou cunning old professor—thou arch deceiver—not a word in my defence against that savage greybeard, dumb villain as thou art! I will away from these walls, but then what woe—what woe—yet—yet!"

His voice continued to utter this, close in their ears, after he himself had disappeared. With the careful eye of a prudent householder and father, Master Rhenfried examined all parts of the room with his lantern, in order to ascertain that nothing of an unhallowed or diabolical kind had been left in the haunted room. He could discover nothing, except that upon the little table there remained the same old gold coins, counted out in payment of the strange lodger's rent.

"Hem!" said the master, thinking awhile to himself, "an honest ghost in his way; yet I must not venture to take possession of it; though, again, it is doubtless a godsend, which ought not to be buried without turning to use, nor misapplied; I will convey it, then, to St. Ursula's hospital. Morning is already glimmering through the window-shutters; I think we will awaken little Margaret, and take her along with us, for the child is always eager, and quite fond of walking that way; none so pleasant, she thinks, when I go along with her."

Very soon, then, the professor and Master Rhenfried were proceeding on their route, conducting the pretty Margery carefully between them, along the beautiful avenue of lime-trees which leads with gentle ascent to the front of the hospital. The little girl laughed and jested in so artless and engaging a manner as to lighten up the sad contemplative features of her companions with occasional smiles. They met one of the women of the establishment, and clasping her little hands, Margery addressed her in the most friendly voice: "Ah, Lady Sibyl! ah, Lady Sibyl! thou that art wont to bring me always such sweet fruit, and get'st nothing but a pat on the cheek in return. Good morning, a very good morning, Lady Sibyl."

Just at that moment was heard a confused uproar on the opposite side to where they stood, and a group of students made their appearance carrying a bier, apparently with some wounded person, to seek assistance at the hospital. Lady Sibylla, at this sight, breaking loose from the child, hastened to her post; the two friends followed her thoughtfully, while Margery hid herself anxiously behind a rose-bush.

The bier was now laid down, the students gathered round in a circle, while the woman began cautiously to examine the person's wounds. They all made way, however, for the professor and Master Rhenfried with marks of great respect, and one of them began to

whisper them how the strange student, Marcellin, had engaged with and disarmed one of the senior students, and then confessed the injustice of which he had been guilty on the previous evening, upon which a complete reconciliation took place. "So it might have been likewise with the second duel," continued the relater, "or at least nothing fatal would perhaps have happened; when suddenly—no one knew whence—an old strange-looking man clad in a red mantle stood in the midst of us all, murmuring some unintelligible words, and looking highly displeased at us. The combatants seemed to fight more and more furiously. In a moment the stranger, stooping down, filled his hands with sand, which he cast repeatedly with the speed of light in thick clouds between the rivals, at the same time loudly laughing, 'Hail to you, old master! well-a-day! have I played you a trick? Now for Venice; now thou hast got it well—woe—woe!'

"We heard him say these words, though he was gone, nobody seemed to know how. Lost in astonishment, we at length turned our eyes to the duellists, who both lay bleeding upon the ground; the senior was dead, and Marcellin we have here brought along with us in the situation you see. Their seconds have made their escape: and we, though less guilty, are come forward willingly to deliver ourselves up to whatever punishment may be thought due. No, we did not leave him helpless upon the ground."

The professor and Rhenfried, not without evident reluctance and shuddering, drew nigh the bier: pale and bloody, Marcellin raised himself up; he knew Nordenholm; moaned, and then exclaimed in rage, "Thou black sorcerer—abandoned sorcerer—I swore to do it—I saw thy hateful visage when you conjured up the image of my sweet wife's father, all sorrowful and bathed in tears. Then sat she in her orange bower, near Naples—in the soft moonshine—know you it—know you it well? In an agony of remorse she turned away from me, and thenceforth our bonds of love were broken asunder. . . . Nay, I have never since once beheld her anywhere on this wide and desolate earth. Then hastened I hither, to have my revenge on thee; and here I must sadly die. And yet now were all obstacles overcome, and the sweet saint were mine again—the partner of my ducal power and splendour—she for whose sake I became a vile apprentice—and God knows what worse—yea, I had led her home—had her mine own in all the pride of love and splendour. . . . But now she is far away, and I am dying—dying, another and another victim of thy hateful infernal arts."

A murmur was heard among the students, "The fever is mounting into his head;" others, however, were more doubtful, and hazarded a variety of conflicting conjectures. Master Rhenfried looked round him with a free and friendly air; he then took his cap off his fine grey head, and spoke in a clear but mild tone, "To the very respectable young students, and any other spectators who may wish to put questions on this affair, I here stake my life and honour that Professor Nordenholm is wholly innocent of causing this young man's death."

The murmurs became still, all moved respectfully in token of assent to the worthy old man, and they began to ad-

vance excuses, and canvass the professor's conduct in a more favourable manner. He himself, however, appeared unconscious of what was passing around him; he stood the very picture of grief, the hot bitter tears coursing each other down his cheeks.

Master Rhenfried meanwhile bent over the dying man, and with gentle firmness said, "You will soon appear in the presence of the great God, my dear sir, and now you see before you the face of that man whom you have the most deeply betrayed and injured, even deprived of his last sweetest hopes on earth. But God be praised—I know, I confess Him who purchased us with His blood, bore all our sins, and has paid the price even for yours. So take comfort, dear sir. I forgive you from the bottom of my soul, and if you depart with feelings of reconciliation and regret, be assured you will likewise meet with still greater compassion—pardon—blessed peace, in that better state to which you are now fast hastening. With whatever evil, deceit, and falsehood, Ludibert, you so vilely assumed the name of Wendelstern on earth, I do confidently predict that for this your sorrow and ruth you shall yet retain your name, and become a fair bright star (*stern*) in heaven, high above all your earthly pomp and state; in a sphere where friend and enemy may unite in the enjoyment of the same heavenly blessedness and delights. Go, take thy rest then, dear Ludibert, with a meek and reconciled spirit, in holy hope, in lively assurance, that thou shalt wake 'mid the light of a brighter and happier morn."

The supposed Marcellin, now the unhappy Ludibert, stretched forth his hands to the good master, and mildly turning his eyes to the spot where stood the late-hated Nordenholm, a friendly smile played upon his features; he pressed his hand, bowed down his head upon it, and died.

Now, too, it was first observed that the female attendant had fallen into a swoon by the side of the bier. The old man gently raised up her head, and held her until she came to herself; when, refusing all further assistance, with feeble step, and drawing her hood and cloak closer around her, she proceeded towards the hospital. The students again raised the bier, and in perfect silence bore the deceased slowly along towards an ancient half-dilapidated church at a short distance; while Nordenholm, not a little consoled after seeing Ludibert's happy departure, with his usual promptness and decision pointed out to them, in few words, when they had laid down the bier at the church door, all that was necessary to be observed on such an occasion, and how they might best clear up their conduct by shunning not, and by disguising nothing from, the civil power. The students bowing respectfully and returning their unanimous thanks, while they at the same time condoled with him, then took their leave, showing by the sorrow of their countenances how much their hearts were amended.

Meanwhile the spital woman had beckoned the aged Rhenfried to accompany her, and stopped as she was entering the hospital under the vaulted entrance, where she began to enter into earnest discourse with him. Seeing the professor approaching, the old master beckoned to him, and said, "Here, friend, this good woman wishes to com-

municate something to us; let us hear her."

She then threw back her veil and hood, and there stood before them the long-lost and lamented Agnes; saintly pale, indeed, and bearing the traces of deep suffering, but whose features were not to be mistaken by the eye of a father and of a lover. In the same serious and lofty frame of mind, produced by what had so recently happened, all three seemed now to regard earthly sorrows and earthly wishes with a spirit of serene and cheerful patience, and whatever the future might have in store for them, either to part with or bear, they were already prepared for, and saw as it were approaching along the vista of coming years.

Little Margaret, who had laid herself to sleep beside the rose-tree, overpowered with the last night's anxieties and fatigue, now came skipping towards them, and playfully caressing the weeping Agnes, said, "How beautiful you look this morning, dear Lady Sibylla, now you have thrown aside your black cap and hood; but you must not cry—women never cry!" But her delight knew no bounds when she learned that the lady was going home to live with her, and was to have the room of the strange old lodger for her own, who was never coming back any more.

This, too, she found to be all true; she was quite enraptured at the change; and under the delicate and incessant guardianship and attentions lavished upon her by the three friends, pretty Margery grew and flourished, until she bloomed in full beauty, one of the most fair and lovely flowers in the rich garland of Germany's gentle women.

Before Vows

Weeks have elapsed, in preparations, in anxious uncertainties on the manner of acting, in abrupt changes of plans and ideas.

The family house has been sold, at the notary's money questions have been settled; all the goods of Ramuntcho have been transformed into gold pieces which are in his hand—

And now is the day of the supreme attempt, the great day,—and already the thick foliage has returned to the trees, the clothing of the tall grass covers anew the prairies; it is May.

In the little wagon, which the famous fast horse drags, they roll on the shady mountain paths, Arrochkoa and Ramuntcho, the two young smugglers, toward that village of Amezqueta. They roll quickly; they plunge into the heart of an infinite region of trees. And, as the hour goes by, all becomes more peaceful around them, and more savage; more primitive, the hamlets; more solitary, the Basque land.

In the shade of the branches, on the borders of the paths, there are pink foxgloves, silences, ferns, almost the same flora as in Brittany; these two countries, the Basque and the Breton,

resemble each other by the granite which is everywhere and by the habitual rain; by the immobility also, and by the continuity of the same religious dream.

Above the two young men who have started for the adventure, thicken the big, customary clouds, the sombre and low sky. The route which they follow, in these mountains ever and ever higher, is deliciously green, dug in the shade, between walls of ferns.

Immobility of several centuries, immobility in beings and in things,—one has more and more the consciousness of it as one penetrates farther into this country of forests and of silence. Under this obscure veil of the sky, where are lost the summits of the grand Pyrenees, appear and run by, isolated houses, centenary farms, hamlets more and more rare,—and they go always under the same vault of oaks, of ageless chestnut trees, which twist even at the side of the path their roots like mossy serpents. They resemble one another, those hamlets separated from one another by so much forest, by so many branches, and inhabited by an antique race, disdainful of all that disturbs, of all that changes: the humble church, most often without a belfry, with a simple campanila on its gray facade, and the square, with its wall painted for that traditional ball-game wherein, from father to son, the men exercise their hard muscles. Everywhere reigned the healthy peace of rustic life, the traditions of which in the Basque land are more immutable than elsewhere.

The few woolen caps which the two bold young men meet on their rapid passage, incline all in a bow, from general politeness first, and from acquaintance above all, for they are, Arrochkoa and Ramuntcho, the two celebrated pelota players of the country;—Ramuntcho, it is true, had been forgotten by many people, but Arrochkoa, everybody, from Bayonne to San Sebastian, knows his face with healthy colors and the turned up ends of his catlike mustache.

Dividing the journey into two stages, they have slept last night at Mendichoco. And at present they are rolling quickly, the two young men, so preoccupied doubtless that they hardly care to regulate the pace of their vigorous beast.

"You will leave my carriage at Aranotz, at Burugoity, the inn-keeper's, who understands," said Arrochkoa, "for, you understand, as soon as you have accomplished your end I will leave you.—We have business with the people of Buruzabal, horses to lead into Spain tonight, not far from Amezqueta, and I promised to be there before ten o'clock—"

What will they do? They do not know, the two allied friends; this will depend on the turn that things take; they have different projects, all bold and skilful, according to the cases which might present themselves. Two places have been reserved, one for Ramuntcho and the other for her, on board a big emigrant vessel on which the baggage is embarked and which will start tomorrow night from Bordeaux carrying hundreds of Basques to America. At this small station of Aranotz, where the carriage will leave both of them, Ramuntcho and Gracieuse, his love, sister of Arrochkoa, they will take the train for Bayonne, at three o'clock in the morning, and, at Bayonne afterward,

the Irun express to Bordeaux. It will be a hasty flight, which will not give to the little fugitive the time to think, to regain her senses in her terror,—doubtless also in her intoxication deliciously mortal—

A gown, a mantilla of Gracieuse are all ready, at the bottom of the carriage, to replace the veil and the black uniform: things which she wore formerly, before her vows, and which Arrochkoa found in his mother's closets. And Ramuntcho thinks that it will be perhaps real, in a moment, that she will be perhaps there, at his side, very near, on that narrow seat, enveloped with him in the same travelling blanket, flying in the midst of night, to belong to him, at once and forever;—and in thinking of this too much, he feels again a shudder and a dizziness—

"I tell you that she will follow you," repeats his friend, striking him rudely on the leg in protective encouragement, as soon as he sees Ramuntcho sombre and lost in a dream. "I tell you that she will follow you, I am sure! If she hesitates, well, leave the rest to me!"

If she hesitates, then they will be violent, they are resolved, oh, not very violent, only enough to unlace the hands of the old nuns retaining her.—And then, they will carry her into the small wagon, where infallibly the enlacing contact and the tenderness of her former friend will soon turn her young head.

How will it all happen? They do not yet know, relying a great deal on their spirit of decision which has already dragged them out of dangerous passes. But what they know is that they will not weaken. And they go ahead, exciting each other; one would say that they are united now unto death, firm and decided like two bandits at the hour when the capital game is to be played.

The land of thick branches which they traverse, under the oppression of very high mountains which they do not see, is all in ravines, profound and torn up, in precipices, where torrents roar under the green night of the foliage. The oaks, the beeches, the chestnut trees become more and more enormous, living through centuries off a sap ever fresh and magnificent. A powerful verdure is strewn over that disturbed geology; for ages it covers and classifies it under the freshness of its immovable mantle. And this nebulous sky, almost obscure, which is familiar to the Basque country, adds to the impression which they have of a sort of universal meditation wherein the things are plunged; a strange penumbra descends from everywhere, descends from the trees at first, descends from the thick, gray veils above the branches, descends from the great Pyrenees hidden behind the clouds.

And, in the midst of this immense peace and of this green night, they pass, Ramuntcho and Arrochkoa, like two young disturbers going to break charms in the depths of forests. At all cross roads old, granite crosses rise, like alarm signals to warn them; old crosses with this inscription, sublimely simple, which is here something like the device of an entire race: "O crux, ave, spes unica!"

Soon the night will come. Now they are silent, because the hour is going, because the moment approaches, because all these crosses on the road are beginning to intimidate them—

And the day falls, under that sad veil which covers the sky. The valleys become more savage, the country more deserted. And, at the corners of roads,

the old crosses appear, ever with their similar inscriptions: "O crux, ave, spes unica!"

Amezqueta, at the last twilight. They stop their carriage at an outskirt of the village, before the cider mill. Arrochkoa is impatient to go into the house of the sisters, vexed at arriving so late; he fears that the door may not be opened to them. Ramuntcho, silent, lets him act.

It is above, on the hill; it is that isolated house which a cross surmounts and which one sees in relief in white on the darker mass of the mountain. They recommend that as soon as the horse is rested the wagon be brought to them, at a turn, to wait for them. Then, both go into the avenue of trees which leads to that convent and where the thickness of the May foliage makes the obscurity almost nocturnal. Without saying anything to each other, without making a noise with their sandals, they ascend in a supple and easy manner; around them the profound fields are impregnated by the immense melancholy of the night.

Arrochkoa knocks with his finger on the door of the peaceful house:

"I would like to see my sister, if you please," he says to an old nun who opens the door, astonished—

Before he has finished talking, a cry of joy comes from the dark corridor, and a nun, whom one divines is young in spite of the envelopment of her dissembling costume, comes and takes his hand. She has recognized him by his voice,—but has she divined the other who stays behind and does not talk?—

The Mother Superior has come also, and, in the darkness of the stairway, she makes them go up to the parlor of the little country convent; then she brings the cane-seat chairs and everyone sits down, Arrochkoa near his sister, Ramuntcho opposite,—and they face each other at last, the two lovers, and a silence, full of the beating of arteries, full of leaps of hearts, full of fever, descends upon them—

Truly, in this place, one knows not what peace almost sweet and a little sepulchral also envelops the terrible interview; in the depth of the chests, the hearts beat with great blows, but the words of love or of violence, the words die before passing the lips.—And this peace, more and more establishes itself; it seems as if a white shroud little by little is covering everything, in order to calm and to extinguish.

There is nothing very peculiar, however, in this humble parlor: four walls absolutely bare under a coat of whitewash; a wooden ceiling; a floor where one slips, so carefully waxed it is; on a table, a plaster Virgin, already indistinct, among all the similar white things of the background where the twilight of May is dying. And a window without curtains, open on the grand Pyrenean horizons invaded by night.—But, from this voluntary poverty, from this white simplicity, is exhaled a notion of definitive impersonality, of renunciation forever; and the irremediability of accomplished things begins to manifest itself to the mind of Ramuntcho, while bringing to him a sort of peace, of sudden and involuntary resignation.

The two smugglers, immovable on their chairs, appear as silhouettes, of wide shoulders on all this white of the walls, and of their lost features one hardly sees the black more intense of the mustache and the eyes. The two

nuns, whose outlines are unified by the veil, seem already to be two spectres all black—

"Wait, Sister Mary Angelique," says the Mother Superior to the transformed young girl who was formerly named Gracieuse, "wait sister till I light the lamp in order that you may at least see your brother's face!"

She goes out, leaving them together, and, again, silence falls on this rare instant, perhaps unique, impossible to regain, when they are alone—

She comes back with a little lamp which makes the eyes of the smugglers shine,—and with a gay voice, a kind air, asks, looking at Ramuntcho:

"And this one? A second brother, I suppose?—"

"Oh, no," says Arrochkoa in a singular tone. "He is only my friend."

In truth, he is not their brother, that Ramuntcho who stays there, ferocious and mute.—And how he would frighten the quiet nuns if they knew what storm brings him here!—

The same silence returns, heavy and disquieting, on these beings who, it seems, should talk simply of simple things; and the old Mother Superior remarks it, is astonished by it.—But the quick eyes of Ramuntcho become immovable, veil themselves as if they are fascinated by some invisible tamer. Under the harsh envelope, still beating, of his chest, the calmness, the imposed calmness continues to penetrate and to extend. On him, doubtless, are acting the mysterious, white powers which are here in the air; religious heredities which were asleep in the depths of his being fill him now with unexpected respect and submissiveness; the antique symbols dominate him: the crosses met in the evening along the road and that plaster Virgin of the color of snow, immaculate on the spotless white of the wall—

"Well, my children, talk of the things of Etchezar," says the Mother Superior to Gracieuse and to her brother. "We shall leave you alone, if you wish," she adds with a sign to Ramuntcho to follow her.

"Oh, no" protests Arrochkoa, "Let him stay.—No, he is not the one—who prevents us—"

And the little nun, veiled in the fashion of the Middle Age, lowers her head, to maintain her eyes hidden in the shade of her austere headdress.

The door remains open, the window remains open; the house, the things retain their air of absolute confidence, of absolute security, against violations and sacrilege. Now two other sisters, who are very old, set a small table, put two covers, bring to Arrochkoa and to his friend a little supper, a loaf of bread, cheese, cake, grapes from the arbor. In arranging these things they have a youthful gaiety, a babble almost childish—and all this is strangely opposed to the ardent violence which is here, hushed, thrown back into the depth of minds, as under the blows of some mace covered with white—

And, in spite of themselves, they are seated at the table, the two smugglers, opposite each other, yielding to insistence and eating absent-mindedly the frugal things, on a cloth as white as the walls. Their broad shoulders, accustomed to loads, lean on the backs of the little chairs and make their frail wood crack. Around them come and go the Sisters, ever with their discreet talk and their puerile laugh, which escape, somewhat softened, from under

their veils. Alone, she remains mute and motionless, Sister Mary Angelique: standing near her brother who is seated, she places her hand on his powerful shoulder; so lithe beside him that she looks like a saint of a primitive church picture. Ramuntcho, sombre, observes them both; he had not been able to see yet the face of Gracieuse, so severely her headdress framed it. They resemble each other still, the brother and the sister; in their very long eyes, which have acquired expressions more than ever different remains something inexplicably similar, persists the same flame, that flame which impelled one toward adventures and the life of the muscles, the other toward mystic dreams, toward mortification and annihilation of flesh. But she has become as frail as he is robust; her breast doubtless is no more, nor her hips; the black vestment wherein her body remains hidden falls straight like a furrow enclosing nothing carnal.

And now, for the first time, they are face to face, Gracieuse and Ramuntcho; their eyes have met and gazed on one another. She does not lower her head before him; but it is as from an infinite distance that she looks at him, it is as from behind white mists that none may scale, as from the other side of an abyss, as from the other side of death; very soft, nevertheless, her glance indicates that she is as if she were absent, gone to tranquil and inaccessible other places.—And it is Ramuntcho at last who, still more tamed, lowers his ardent eyes before her virgin eyes.

They continue to babble, the Sisters; they would like to retain them both at Amezqueta for the night: the weather, they say, is so black, and a storm threatens.—M. the Cure, who went out to take communion to a patient in the mountain, will come back; he has known Arrochkoa at Etchezar when a vicar there; he would be glad to give him a room in the parish house—and one to his friend also, of course—

But no, Arrochkoa refuses, after a questioning glance at Ramuntcho. It is impossible to stay in the village; they will even go at once, or after a few moments of conversation, for they are expected on the Spanish frontier.—Gracieuse who, at first, in her mortal disturbance of mind, had not dared to talk, begins to question her brother. Now in Basque, then in French, she asks for news of those whom she has forever abandoned:

"And mother? All alone now in the house, even at night?"

"Oh, no," says Arrochkoa, "Catherine watches over her and sleeps at the house."

"And how is your child, Arrochkoa, has he been christened? What is his name? Lawrence, doubtless, like his grandfather."

Etchezar, their village, is separated from Amezqueta by some sixty kilometres, in a land without more means of communication than in the past centuries:

"Oh, in spite of the distance," says the little nun, "I get news of you sometimes. Last month, people here had met on the market place of Hasparren, women of our village; that is how I learned—many things.—At Easter I had hoped to see you; I was told that there would be a ball-game at Erricalde and that you would come to play there; then I said to myself that perhaps you would come here—and, while the festi-

val lasted, I looked often at the road through this window, to see if you were coming—"

And she shows the window, open on the blackness of the savage country—from which ascends an immense silence, with, from time to time, the noise of spring, intermittent musical notes of crickets and tree-toads.

Hearing her talk so quietly, Ramuntcho feels confounded by this renunciation of all things; she appears to him still more irrevocably changed, far-off—poor little nun!—Her name was Gracieuse; now her name is Sister Mary Angelique, and she has no relatives; impersonal here, in this little house with white walls, without terrestrial hope and without desire, perhaps—one might as well say that she has departed for the regions of the grand oblivion of death. And yet, she smiles, quite serene now and apparently not even suffering.

Arrochkoa looks at Ramuntcho, questions him with a piercing eye accustomed to fathom the black depths—and, tamed himself by all this unexpected peace, he understands very well that his bold comrade dares no longer, that all the projects have fallen, that all is useless and inert in presence of the invisible wall with which his sister is surrounded. At moments, pressed to end all in one way or in another, in a haste to break this charm or to submit to it and to fly before it, he pulls his watch, says that it is time to go, because of the friends who are waiting for them.—The Sisters know well who these friends are and why they are waiting but they are not affected by this: Basques themselves, daughters and granddaughters of Basques, they have the blood of smugglers in their veins and consider such things indulgently—

At last, for the first time, Gracieuse utters the name of Ramuntcho; not daring, however, to address him directly, she asks her brother, with a calm smile:

"Then he is with you, Ramuntcho, now? You work together?"

A silence follows, and Arrochkoa looks at Ramuntcho.

"No," says the latter, in a slow and sombre voice, "no—I, I go to-morrow to America—"

Every word of this reply, harshly scanned, is like a sound of trouble and of defiance in the midst of that strange serenity. She leans more heavily on her brother's shoulder, the little nun, and Ramuntcho, conscious of the profound blow which he has struck, looks at her and envelops her with his tempting eyes, having regained his audacity, attractive and dangerous in the last effort of his heart full of love, of his entire being of youth and of flame made for tenderness.—Then, for an uncertain minute, it seems as if the little convent had trembled; it seems as if the white powers of the air recoiled, went out like sad, unreal mists before this young dominator, come here to hurl the triumphant appeal of life. And the silence which follows is the heaviest of all the silent moments which have interrupted already that species of drama played almost without words—

At last, Sister Mary Angelique talks, and talks to Ramuntcho himself. Really it does not seem as if her heart had just been torn supremely by the announcement of that departure, nor as if she had just shuddered under that lover's look.—With a voice which little by little becomes firmer in softness, she says very simple things, as to any friend.

"We shall all pray the Holy Virgin to accompany you in your voyage—"

And it is the smuggler who lowers the head, realizing that all is ended, that she is lost forever, the little companion of his childhood; that she has been buried in an inviolable shroud.—The words of love and of temptation which he had thought of saying, the projects which he had revolved in his mind for months, all these seemed insensate, sacrilegious, impossible things, childish bravadoes.—Arrochkoa, who looks at him attentively, is under the same irresistible and light charm; they understand each other and, to one another, without words, they confess that there is nothing to do, that they will never dare—

Nevertheless an anguish, still human appears in the eyes of Sister Mary Angelique when Arrochkoa rises for the definite departure: she prays, in a changed voice, for them to stay a moment longer. And Ramuntcho suddenly feels like throwing himself on his knees in front of her; his head on the hem of her veil, sobbing all the tears that stifle him; like begging for mercy, like begging for mercy also of that Mother Superior who has so soft an air; like telling both of them that this sweetheart of his childhood was his hope, his courage, his life, and that people must have a little pity, people must give her back to him, because, without her, there is no longer anything.—All that his heart contains that is infinitely good is exalted at present into an immense necessity to implore, into an outbreak of supplicating prayer and also into a confidence in the kindness, in the pity of others—

And who knows, if he had dared formulate that great prayer of pure tenderness, who knows what he might have awakened of kindness also, and of tenderness and of humanity in the poor, black-veiled girl?—Perhaps this old Mother Superior herself, this old, dried-up girl with childish smile and grave, pure eyes, would have opened her arms to him, as to a son, understanding everything, forgiving everything, despite the rules and despite the vows? And perhaps Gracieuse might have been returned to him, without kidnapping, without deception, almost excused by her companions of the cloister. Or at last, if that was impossible, she would have bade him a long farewell, consoling, softened by a kiss of immaterial love—

But no, he stays there mute on his chair. Even that prayer he cannot make. And it is the hour to go, decidedly. Arrochkoa is up, agitated, calling him with an imperious sign of the head. Then he straightens up also his proud bust and takes his cap to follow Arrochkoa. They express their thanks for the little supper which was given to them and they say good-night, timidly. During their entire visit they were very respectful, almost timid, the two superb smugglers. And, as if hope had not just been undone, as if one of them was not leaving behind him his life, they descend quietly the neat stairway, between the white walls, while the good Sisters light the way with their little lamp.

"Come, Sister Mary Angelique," gaily proposes the Mother Superior, in her frail, infantile voice, "we shall escort them to the end of our avenue, you know, near the village."

Is she an old fairy, sure of her power, or a simple and unconscious woman, playing without knowing it, with a great,

devouring fire?—It was all finished; the parting had been accomplished; the farewell accepted; the struggle stifled under white wadding,—and now the two who adored each other are walking side by side, outside, in the tepid night of spring!—in the amorous, enveloping night, under the cover of the new leaves and on the tall grass, among all the saps that ascend in the midst of the sovereign growth of universal life.

They walk with short steps, through this exquisite obscurity, as in silent accord, to make the shaded path last longer, both mute, in the ardent desire and the intense fear of contact of their clothes, of a touch of their hands. Arrochkoa and the Mother Superior follow them closely, on their heels; without talking, nuns with their sandals, smugglers with their rope soles, they go through these soft, dark spots without making more noise than phantoms, and their little cortege, slow and strange, descends toward the wagon in a funereal silence. Silence also around them, everywhere in the grand, ambient black, in the depth of the mountains and the woods. And in the sky without stars, sleep the big clouds, heavy with all the water that the soil awaits and which will fall to-morrow to make the woods still more leafy, the grass still higher; the big clouds above their heads cover all the splendor of the southern summer which so often, in their childhood, charmed them together, disturbed them together, but which Ramuntcho will doubtless never see again and which in the future Gracieuse will have to look at with eyes of one dead, without understanding nor recognizing it—

There is no one around them, in the little obscure alley, and the village seems asleep already. The night has fallen quite; its grand mystery is scattered everywhere, on the mountains and the savage valleys.—And, how easy it would be to execute what these two young men have resolved, in that solitude, with that wagon which is ready and that fast horse!—

However, without having talked, without having touched each other, they come, the lovers, to that turn of the path where they must bid each other an eternal farewell. The wagon is there, held by a boy; the lantern is lighted and the horse impatient. The Mother Superior stops: it is, apparently, the last point of the last walk which they will take together in this world,—and she feels the power, that old nun, to decide that it will be thus, without appeal. With the same little, thin voice, almost gay, she says:

"Come, Sister, say good-bye."

And she says that with the assurance of a Fate whose decrees of death are not disputable.

In truth, nobody attempts to resist her order, impassibly given. He is vanquished, the rebellious Ramuntcho, oh, quite vanquished by the tranquil, white powers; trembling still from the battle which has just come to an end in him, he lowers his head, without will now, and almost without thought, as under the influence of some sleeping potion—

"Come, Sister, say good-bye," the old, tranquil Fate has said. Then, seeing that Gracieuse has only taken Arrochkoa's hand, she adds:

"Well, you do not kiss your brother?—"

Doubtless, the little Sister Mary Angelique asks for nothing better, to kiss him with all her heart, with all her

soul; to clasp him, her brother, to lean on his shoulder and to seek his protection, at that hour of superhuman sacrifice when she must let the cherished one leave her without even a word of love.—And still, her kiss has in it something frightened, at once drawn back; the kiss of a nun, somewhat similar to the kiss of one dead.—When will she ever see him again, that brother, who is not to leave the Basque country, however? When will she have news of her mother, of the house, of the village, from some passer-by who will stop here, coming from Etchezar?—

"We will pray," she says again, "to the Holy Virgin to protect you in your long voyage—"

—And how they go; slowly they turn back, like silent shades, toward the humble convent which the cross protects, and the two tamed smugglers, immovable on the road, look at their veils, darker than the night of the trees, disappearing in the obscure avenue.

Oh! she is wrecked also, the one who will disappear in the darkness of the little, shady hill.—But she is nevertheless soothed by white, peaceful vapors, and all that she suffers will soon be quieted under a sort of sleep. To-morrow she will take again, until death, the course of her strangely simple existence; impersonal, devoted to a series of daily duties which never change, absorbed in a reunion of creatures almost neutral, who have abdicated everything, she will be able to walk with eyes lifted ever toward the soft, celestial mirage—

O crux, ave, spes unica!—

To live, without variety or truce to the end, between the white walls of a cell always the same, now here, then elsewhere, at the pleasure of a strange will, in one of those humble village convents to which one has not even the leisure to become attached. On this earth, to possess nothing and to desire nothing, to wait for nothing, to hope for nothing. To accept as empty and transitory the fugitive hours of this world, and to feel freed from everything, even from love, as much as by death.—The mystery of such lives remains forever unintelligible to those young men who are there, made for the daily battle, beautiful beings of instinct and of strength, a prey to all the desires; created to enjoy life and to suffer from it, to love it and to continue it—

O crux, ave, spes unica!—One sees them no longer, they have re-entered their little, solitary convent.

The two men have not exchanged even a word on their abandoned undertaking, on the ill-defined cause which for the first time has undone their courage; they feel, toward one another, almost a sense of shame of their sudden and insurmountable timidity.

For an instant their proud heads were turned toward the nuns slowly fleeing; now they look at each other through the night.

They are going to part, and probably forever: Arrochkoa puts into his friend's hands the reins of the little wagon which, according to his promise, he lends to him:

"Well, my poor Ramuntcho!—" he says, in a tone of commiseration hardly affectionate.

And the unexpressed end of the phrase signifies clearly:

"Go, since you have failed; and I have to go and meet my friends—"

Ramuntcho would have kissed him

with all his heart for the last farewell,—and in this embrace of the brother of the beloved one, he would have shed doubtless good, hot tears which, for a moment at least, would have cured him a little.

But no, Arrochkoa has become again the Arrochkoa of the bad days, the gambler without soul, that only bold things interest. Absent-mindedly, he touches Ramuntcho's hand:

"Well, good-bye!—Good luck—"

And, with silent steps, he goes toward the smugglers, toward the frontier, toward the propitious darkness.

Then Ramuntcho, alone in the world now, whips the little, mountain horse who gallops with his light tinkling of bells.—That train which will pass by Aranotz, that vessel which will start from Bordeaux—an instinct impels Ramuntcho not to miss them. Mechanically he hastens, no longer knowing why, like a body without a mind which continues to obey an ancient impulsion, and, very quickly, he who has no aim and no hope in the world, plunges into the savage country, into the thickness of the woods, in all that profound blackness of the night of May, which the nuns, from their elevated window, see around them—

For him the native land is closed, closed forever; finished are the delicious dreams of his first years. He is a plant uprooted from the dear, Basque soil and which a breath of adventure blows elsewhere.

At the horse's neck, gaily the bells tinkle, in the silence of the sleeping woods; the light of the lantern, which runs hastily, shows to the sad fugitive the under side of branches, fresh verdure of oaks; by the wayside, flowers of France; from distance to distance, the walls of a familiar hamlet, of an old church,—all the things which he will never see again, unless it be, perhaps, in a doubtful and very distant old age—

In front of his route, there is America, exile without probable return, an immense new world, full of surprises and approached now without courage: an entire life, very long, doubtless, during which his mind plucked from here will have to suffer and to harden over there; his vigor spend and exhaust itself none knows where, in unknown labors and struggles—

Above, in their little convent, in their sepulchre with walls so white, the tranquil nuns recite their evening prayers—

O crux, ave, spes unica!—

Heloise and Abelard

HELOISE TO ABELARD

To Abelard her well-beloved in Christ Jesus from Heloise his well-beloved in the same Christ Jesus.

I READ a letter I received from you with great impatience: in spite of all my misfortunes I hoped to find nothing in it besides arguments of comfort. But how ingenious are lovers in tormenting themselves. Judge of the exquisite sensibility and force of my love by that which causes the grief of my soul. I was disturbed at the superscription of your letter; why did you place the name of Heloise before that of Abelard? What means this cruel and unjust distinction? It was your name only—the name of a father and a husband—which my eager eyes sought for. I did not look for my own, which I would if possible forget, for it is the cause of all your misfortunes. The rules of decorum, and your position as master and director over me, opposed that ceremony in addressing me; and love commanded you to banish it: alas! you know all this but too well!

Did you address me thus before cruel fortune had ruined my happiness? I see your heart has forsaken me, and you have made greater advances in the way of devotion than I could wish. Alas! I am too weak to follow you; condescend at least to stay for me and animate me with your advice. Can you have the cruelty to abandon me? The fear of this stabs my heart; the fearful presages you make at the end of your letter, those terrible images you draw of your death, quite distract me. Cruel Abelard! you ought to have stopped my tears and you make them flow. You ought to have quelled the turmoil of my heart and you throw me into greater disorder.

You desire that after your death I should take care of your ashes and pay them the last duties. Alas! in what temper did you conceive these mournful ideas, and how could you describe them to me? Did not the dread of causing my immediate death make the pen drop from your hand? You did not reflect, I suppose, upon all those torments to which you were going to deliver me? Heaven, severe as it has been to me, is not so insensible as to permit me to live one moment after you. Life without Abelard were an insupportable punishment, and death a most exquisite happiness if by that means I could be united to him. If Heaven but hearken to my continual cry, your days will be prolonged and you will bury me.

Is it not your part to prepare me by powerful exhortation against that great crisis which shakes the most resolute and stable minds? Is it not your part to receive my last sighs, superintend my funeral, and give an account of my acts and my faith? Who but you can recommend us worthily to God, and by the fervour and merit of your prayers conduct those souls to Him which you have joined to His worship by solemn vows? We expect those pious offices from your paternal charity. After this you will be free from those

disquietudes which now molest you, and you will quit life with ease whenever it shall please God to call you away. You may follow us content with what you have done, and in a full assurance of our happiness. But till then write me no more such terrible things; for we are already sufficiently miserable, nor need to have our sorrows aggravated. Our life here is but a languishing death; would you hasten it? Our present disgraces are sufficient to employ our thoughts continually, and shall we seek in the future new reasons for fear? How void of reason are men, said Seneca, to make distant evils present by reflections, and to take pains before death to lose all the joys of life.

When you have finished your course here below, you said that it is your desire that your body be borne to the House of the Paraclete, to the intent that being always before my eyes you may be ever present in my mind. Can you think that the traces you have drawn on my heart can ever be worn out, or that any length of time can obliterate the memory we hold here of your benefits? And what time shall I find for those prayers you speak of? Alas! I shall then be filled with other cares, for so heavy a misfortune would leave me no moment's quiet. Can my feeble reason resist such powerful assaults? When I am distracted and raving (if I dare say it) even against Heaven itself, I shall not soften it by my cries, but rather provoke it by my reproaches. How should I pray or how bear up against my grief? I should be more eager to follow you than to pay you the sad ceremonies of a funeral. It is for you, for Abelard, that I have resolved to live, and if you are ravished from me I can make no use of my miserable days. Alas! what lamentations should I make if Heaven, by a cruel pity, preserved me for that moment? When I but think of this last separation I feel all the pangs of death; what should I be then if I should see this dreadful hour? Forbear therefore to infuse into my mind such mournful thoughts, if not for love, at least for pity.

You desire me to give myself up to my duty, and to be wholly God's, to whom I am consecrated. How can I do that, when you frighten me with apprehensions that continually possess my mind both night and day? When an evil threatens us, and it is impossible to ward it off, why do we give up ourselves to the unprofitable fear of it, which is yet even more tormenting than the evil itself? What have I hope for after the loss of you? What can confine me to earth when death shall have taken away from me all that was dear on it? I have renounced without difficulty all the charms of life, preserving only my love, and the secret pleasure of thinking incessantly of you, and hearing that you live. And yet, alas! you do not live for me, and I dare not flatter myself even with the hope that I shall ever see you again. This is the greatest of my afflictions.

Merciless Fortune! hadst thou not persecuted me enough? Thou dost not give me any respite; thou hast exhausted all thy vengeance upon me, and reserved thyself nothing whereby thou mayst appear terrible to others. Thou hast wearied thyself in tormenting me, and others have nothing to fear from thy anger. But what use to longer arm thyself against me? The wounds I have

already received leave no room for others, unless thou desirest to kill me. Or dost thou fear amidst the numerous torments heaped on me, dost thou fear that such a final stroke would deliver me from all other ills? Therefore thou preservest me from death in order to make me die daily.

Dear Abelard, pity my despair! Was ever any being so miserable? The higher you raised me above other women, who envied me your love, the more sensible am I now of the loss of your heart. I was exalted to the top of happiness only that I might have the more terrible fall. Nothing could be compared to my pleasures, and now nothing can equal my misery. My joys once raised the envy of my rivals, my present wretchedness calls forth the compassion of all that see me. My Fortune has been always in extremes; she has loaded me with the greatest favours and then heaped me with the greatest afflictions; ingenious in tormenting me, she has made the memory of the joys I have lost an inexhaustible spring of tears. Love, which being possessed was her most delightful gift, on being taken away is an untold sorrow. In short, her malice has entirely succeeded, and I find my present afflictions proportionately bitter as the transports which charmed me were sweet.

But what aggravates my sufferings yet more is, that we began to be miserable at a time when we seemed the least to deserve it. While we gave ourselves up to the enjoyment of a guilty love nothing opposed our pleasures; but scarcely had we retrenched our passion and taken refuge in matrimony, than the wrath of Heaven fell on us with all its weight. And how barbarous was your punishment! Ah! what right had a cruel Uncle over us? We were joined to each other even before the altar and this should have protected us from the rage of our enemies. Besides, we were separated; you were busy with your lectures and instructed a learned audience in mysteries which the greatest geniuses before you could not penetrate; and I, in obedience to you, retired to a cloister. I there spent whole days in thinking of you, and sometimes meditating on holy lessons to which I endeavoured to apply myself. At this very juncture punishment fell upon us, and you who were least guilty became the object of the whole vengeance of a barbarous man. But why should I rave at Fulbert? I, wretched I, have ruined you, and have been the cause of all your misfortunes. How dangerous it is for a great man to suffer himself to be moved by our sex! He ought from his infancy to be inured to insensibility of heart against all our charms. "Hearken, my son," said formerly the wisest of men, "attend and keep my instructions; if a beautiful woman by her looks endeavour to entice thee, permit not thyself to be overcome by a corrupt inclination; reject the poison she offers, and follow not the paths she directs. Her house is the gate of destruction and death." I have long examined things, and have found that death is less dangerous than beauty. It is the shipwreck of liberty, a fatal snare, from which it is impossible ever to get free. It was a woman who threw down the first man from the glorious position in which Heaven had placed him; she, who was created to partake of his happiness, was the sole cause of his ruin. How bright had been the glory of Samson if his

heart had been proof against the charms of Delilah, as against the weapons of the Philistines. A woman disarmed and betrayed him who had been a conqueror of armies. He saw himself delivered into the hands of his enemies; he was deprived of his eyes, those inlets of love into the soul; distracted and despairing he died without any consolation save that of including his enemies in his ruin. Solomon, that he might please women, forsook pleasing God; that king whose wisdom princes came from all parts to admire, he whom God had chosen to build the temple, abandoned the worship of the very altars he had raised, and proceeded to such a pitch of folly as even to burn incense to idols. Job had no enemy more cruel than his wife; what temptations did he not bear? The evil spirit who had declared himself his persecutor employed a woman as an instrument to shake his constancy. And the same evil spirit made Heloise an instrument to ruin Abelard. All the poor comfort I have is that I am not the voluntary cause of your misfortunes. I have not betrayed you; but my constancy and love have been destructive to you. If I have committed a crime in loving you so constantly I cannot repent it. I have endeavoured to please you even at the expense of my virtue, and therefore deserve the pains I feel. As soon as I was persuaded of your love I delayed scarce a moment in yielding to your protestations; to be beloved by Abelard was in my esteem so great a glory, and I so impatiently desired it, not to believe in it immediately. I aimed at nothing but convincing you of my utmost passion. I made no use of those defences of disdain and honour; those enemies of pleasure which tyrannise over our sex made in me but a weak and unprofitable resistance. I sacrificed all to my love, and I forced my duty to give place to the ambition of making happy the most famous and learned person of the age. If any consideration had been able to stop me, it would have been without doubt my love. I feared lest having nothing further to offer you your passion might become languid, and you might seek for new pleasures in another conquest. But it was easy for you to cure me of a suspicion so opposite to my own inclination. I ought to have foreseen other more certain evils, and to have considered that the idea of lost enjoyments would be the trouble of my whole life.

How happy should I be could I wash out with my tears the memory of those pleasures which I yet think of with delight. At least I will try by strong endeavour to smother in my heart those desires to which the frailty of my nature gives birth, and I will exercise on myself such torments as those you have to suffer from the rage of your enemies. I will endeavour by this means to satisfy you at least, if I cannot appease an angry God. For to show you to what a deplorable condition I am reduced, and how far my repentance is from being complete, I dare even accuse Heaven at this moment of cruelty for delivering you over to the snares prepared for you. My repinings can only kindle divine wrath, when I should be seeking for mercy.

In order to expiate a crime it is not sufficient to bear the punishment; whatever we suffer is of no avail if the passion still continues and the heart is filled with the same desire. It is an easy matter to confess a weakness, and inflict on

ourselves some punishment, but it needs perfect power over our nature to extinguish the memory of pleasures, which by a loved habitude have gained possession of our minds. How many persons do we see who make an outward confession of their faults, yet, far from being in distress about them, take a new pleasure in relating them. Contrition of the heart ought to accompany the confession of the mouth, yet this very rarely happens. I, who have experienced so many pleasures in loving you, feel, in spite of myself, that I cannot repent them, nor forbear through memory to enjoy them over again. Whatever efforts I use, on whatever side I turn, the sweet thought still pursues me, and every object brings to my mind what it is my duty to forget. During the quiet night, when my heart ought to be still in that sleep which suspends the greatest cares, I cannot avoid the illusions of my heart. I dream I am still with my dear Abelard. I see him, I speak to him and hear him answer. Charmed with each other we forsake our studies and give ourselves up to love. Sometimes too I seem to struggle with your enemies; I oppose their fury, I break into piteous cries, and in a moment I awake in tears. Even into holy places before the altar I carry the memory of our love, and far from lamenting for having been seduced by pleasures, I sigh for having lost them.

I remember (for nothing is forgot by lovers) the time and place in which you first declared your passion and swore you would love me till death. Your words, your oaths, are deeply graven in my heart. My stammering speech betrays to all the disorder of my mind; my sighs discover me, and your name is ever on my lips. O Lord! when I am thus afflicted why dost not Thou pity my weakness and strengthen me with Thy grace? You are happy, Abelard, in that grace is given you, and your misfortune has been the occasion of your finding rest. The punishment of your body has cured the deadly wounds of your soul. The tempest has driven you into the haven. God, who seemed to deal heavily with you, sought only to help you; He was a Father chastising and not an Enemy revenging—a wise Physician putting you to some pain in order to preserve your life. I am a thousand times more to be pitied than you, for I have still a thousand passions to fight. I must resist those fires which love kindles in a young heart. Our sex is nothing but weakness, and I have the greater difficulty in defending myself because the enemy that attacks me pleases me; I doat on the danger which threatens; how then can I avoid yielding?

In the midst of these struggles I try at least to conceal my weakness from those you have entrusted to my care. All who are about me admire my virtue, but could their eyes penetrate into my heart what would they not discover? My passions there are in rebellion; I preside over others, but cannot rule myself. I have a false covering, and this seeming virtue is a real vice. Men judge me praiseworthy, but I am guilty before God; from His all-seeing eye nothing is hid, and He views through all their windings the secrets of the heart. I cannot escape His discovery. And yet it means great effort to me merely to maintain this appearance of virtue, so surely this troublesome hypocrisy is in some sort com-

mendable. I give no scandal to the world which is so easy to take bad impressions; I do not shake the virtue of those feeble ones who are under my rule. With my heart full of the love of man, I teach them at least to love only God. Charmed with the pomp of worldly pleasures, I endeavor to show them that they are all vanity and deceit. I have just strength enough to conceal from them my longings, and I look upon that as a great effect of grace. If it is not enough to make me embrace virtue, 't is enough to keep me from committing sin.

And yet it is in vain to try and separate these two things: they must be guilty who are not righteous, and they depart from virtue who delay to approach it. Besides, we ought to have no other motive than the love of God. Alas! what can I then hope for? I own to my confusion I fear more to offend a man than to provoke God, and I study less to please Him than to please you. Yes, it was your command only, and not a sincere vocation, which sent me into these cloisters; I sought to give you ease and not to sanctify myself. How unhappy am I! I tear myself from all that pleases me; I bury myself alive; I exercise myself with the most rigid fastings and all those severities the cruel laws impose on us; I feed myself with tears and sorrows; and notwithstanding this I merit nothing by my penance. My false piety has long deceived you as well as others; you have thought me at peace when I was more disturbed than ever. You persauded yourself I was wholly devoted to my duty, yet I had no business but love. Under this mistake you desire my prayers—alas! I need yours! Do not presume upon my virtue and my care; I am wavering, fix me by your advice; I am feeble, sustain and guide me by your counsel.

What occasion had you to praise me? Praise is often hurtful for those on whom it is bestowed: a secret vanity springs up in the heart, blinds us, and conceals from us the wounds that are half healed. A seducer flatters us, and at the same time destroys us. A sincere friend disguises nothing from us, and far from passing a light hand over the wound, makes us feel it the more intensely by applying remedies. Why do you not deal after this manner with me? Will you be esteemed a base, dangerous flatterer? or if you chance to see anything commendable in me, have you no fear that vanity, which is so natural to all women, should quite efface it? But let us not judge of virtue by outward appearances, for then the reprobate as well as the elect may lay claim to it. An artful impostor may by his address gain more admiration than is given to the zeal of a saint.

The heart of man is a labyrinth whose windings are very difficult to discover. The praises you give me are the more dangerous because I love the person who bestows them. The more I desire to please you the readier am I to believe the merit you attribute to me. Ah! think rather how to nerve my weakness by wholesome remonstrances! Be rather fearful than confident of my salvation; say our virtue is founded upon weakness, and that they only will be crowned who have fought with the greatest difficulties. But I seek not the crown which is the reward of victory—I am content if I can avoid danger. It is easier to keep

out of the way than to win a battle. There are several degrees in glory, and I am not ambitious of the highest; I leave them to those of greater courage who have often been victorious. I seek not to conquer for fear I should be overcome; happiness enough for me to escape shipwreck and at last reach port. Heaven commands me to renounce my fatal passion for you, but oh! my heart will never be able to consent to it. Adieu.

HELOISE TO ABELARD

Dear Abelard,—You expect, perhaps, that I should accuse you of negligence. You have not answered my last letter, and, thanks to Heaven, in the condition I am now in it is a relief to me that you show so much insensibility for the passion which I betrayed. At last, Abelard, you have lost Heloise for ever. Notwithstanding all the oaths I made to think of nothing but you, and to be entertained by nothing but you, I have banished you from my thoughts, I have forgot you. Thou charming idea of a lover I once adored, thou wilt be no more my happiness! Dear image of Abelard! thou wilt no longer follow me, no longer shall I remember thee. O celebrity and merit of that man who, in spite of his enemies, is the wonder of the age! O enchanting pleasures to which Heloise resigned herself—you, you have been my tormentors! I confess my inconstancy, Abelard, without a blush; let my infidelity teach the world that there is no depending on the promises of women—we are all subject to change. This troubles you, Abelard; this news without doubt surprises you; you never imagined Heloise could be inconstant. She was prejudiced by such a strong inclination towards you that you cannot conceive how Time could alter it. But be undeceived, I am going to disclose to you my falseness, though, instead of reproaching me, I persuade myself you will shed tears of joy. When I tell you what Rival hath ravished my heart from you, you will praise my inconstancy, and pray this Rival to fix it. By this you will know that 't is God alone that takes Heloise from you. Yes, my dear Abelard, He gives my mind that tranquility which a vivid remembrance of our misfortunes formerly forbade. Just Heaven! what other rival could take me from you? Could you imagine it possible for a mere human to blot you from my heart? Could you think me guilty of sacrificing the virtuous and learned Abelard to any other but God? No, I believe you have done me justice on this point. I doubt not you are eager to learn what means God used to accomplish so great an end? I will tell you, that you may wonder at the secret ways of Providence. Some few days after you sent me your last letter I fell dangerously ill; the physicians gave me over, and I expected certain death. Then it was that my passion, which always before seemed innocent, grew criminal in my eyes. My memory represented faithfully to me all the past actions of my life, and I confess to you pain for our love was the only pain I felt. Death, which till then I had only viewed from a distance, now presented itself to me as it appears to sinners. I began to dread the wrath of God now I was near experiencing it, and I repented that I had not better used the means of Grace. Those tender letters I wrote to you, those fond conversations I have had with

you, give me as much pain now as they had formerly given pleasure. "Ah, miserable Heloise!" I said, "if it is a crime to give oneself up to such transports, and if, after this life is ended, punishment certainly follows them, why didst thou not resist such dangerous temptations? Think on the tortures prepared for thee, consider with terror the store of torments, and recollect, at the same time, those pleasures which thy deluded soul thought so entrancing. Ah! dost thou not despair for having rioted in such false pleasures?" In short, Abelard, imagine all the remorse of mind I suffered, and you will not be astonished at my change.

Solitude is insupportable to the uneasy mind; its troubles increase in the midst of silence, and retirement heightens them. Since I have been shut up in these walls I have done nothing but weep our misfortunes. This cloister has resounded with my cries, and, like a wretch condemned to eternal slavery, I have worn out my days with grief. Instead of fulfilling God's merciful design towards me I have offended against Him; I have looked upon this sacred refuge as a frightful prison, and have borne with unwillingness the yoke of the Lord. Instead of purifying myself with a life of penitence I have confirmed my condemnation. What a fatal mistake! But, Abelard, I have torn off the bandage which blinded me, and, if I dare rely upon my own feelings, I have now made myself worthy of your esteem. You are to me no more the loving Abelard who constantly sought private conversations with me by deceiving the vigilance of our observers. Our misfortunes gave you a horror of vice, and you instantly consecrated the rest of your days to virtue, and seemed to submit willingly to the necessity. I, indeed, more tender than you, and more sensible to pleasure, bore misfortune with extreme impatience, and you have heard my exclaimings against your enemies. You have seen my resentment in my late letters; it was this, doubtless, which deprived me of the esteem of my Abelard. You were alarmed at my repinings, and, if the truth be told, despaired of my salvation. You could not foresee that Heloise would conquer so reigning a passion; but you were mistaken, Abelard, my weakness when supported by grace, has not hindered me from winning a complete victory. Restore me, then, to your esteem; your own piety should solicit you to this.

But what secret trouble rises in my soul—what unthought-of emotion now rises to oppose the resolution I have formed to sigh no more for Abelard? Just Heaven! have I not triumphed over my love? Unhappy Heloise! as long as thou drawest a breath it is decreed thou must love Abelard. Weep, unfortunate wretch, for thou never hadst a more just occasion. I ought to die of grief; grace had overtaken me and I had promised to be faithful to it, but now am I perjured once more, and even grace is sacrificed to Abelard. This sacrilege fills up the measure of my iniquity. After this how can I hope that God will open to me the treasure of His mercy, for I have tired out His forgiveness. I began to offend Him from the first moment I saw Abelard; an unhappy sympathy engaged us both in a guilty love, and God raised us up an enemy to separate us. I lament the misfortune which lighted upon us and

I adore the cause. Ah! I ought rather to regard this misfortune as the gift of Heaven, which disapproved of our engagement and parted us, and I ought to apply myself to extirpate my passion. How much better it were to forget entirely the object of it than to preserve a memory so fatal to my peace and salvation? Great God! shall Abelard possess my thoughts for ever? Can I never free myself from the chains of love? But perhaps I am unreasonably afraid; virtue directs all my acts and they are all subject to grace. Therefore fear not, Abelard; I have no longer those sentiments which being described in my letters have occasioned you so much trouble. I will no more endeavour, by the relation of those pleasures our passion gave us, to awaken any guilty fondness you may yet feel for me. I free you from all your oaths; forget the titles of lover and husband and keep only that of father. I expect no more from you tender protestations and those letters so proper to feed the flame of love. I demand nothing of you but spiritual advice and wholesome discipline. The path of holiness, however thorny it be, will yet appear agreeable to me if I may but walk in your footsteps. You will always find me ready to follow you. I shall read with more pleasure the letters in which you shall describe the advantages of virtue than ever I did those in which you so artfully instilled the poison of passion. You cannot now be silent without a crime. When I was possessed with so violent a love, and pressed you so earnestly to write to me, how many letters did I send you before I could obtain one from you? You denied me in my misery the only comfort which was left me, because you thought it pernicious. You endeavoured by severities to force me to forget you, nor do I blame you; but now you have nothing to fear. This fortunate illness, with which Providence has chastised me for my good, has done what all human efforts and your cruelty in vain attempted. I see now the vanity of that happiness we had set our hearts upon as if it were eternal. What fears, what distress have we not suffered for it!

No, Lord, there is no pleasure upon earth but that which virtue gives. The heart amidst all worldly delights feels a sting; it is uneasy and restless until fixed on Thee. What have I not suffered, Abelard, whilst I kept alive in my retirement those fires which ruined me in the world? I saw with hatred the walls that surrounded me; the hours seemed as long as years. I repented a thousand times that I had buried myself here. But since grace has opened my eyes all the scene has changed; solitude looks charming, and the peace of the place enters my very heart. In the satisfaction of doing my duty I feel a delight above all that riches, pomp, or sensuality could afford. My quiet has indeed cost me dear, for I have bought it at the price of my love; I have offered a violent sacrifice I thought beyond my power. But if I have torn you from my heart, be not jealous; God, who ought always to have possessed it, reigns there in your stead. Be content with having a place in my mind which you shall never lose; I shall always take a secret pleasure in thinking of you, and esteem it a glory to obey those rules you shall give me.

This very moment I receive a letter

from you; I will read it and answer it immediately. You shall see by my promptitude in writing to you that you are always dear to me.

You very obligingly reproach me for delay in writing you any news; my illness must excuse that. I omit no opportunities of giving you marks of my remembrance. I thank you for the uneasiness you say my silence caused you, and the kind fears you express concerning my health. Yours, you tell me, is but weakly, and you thought lately you should have died. With what indifference, cruel man. do you tell me a thing so certain to afflict me? I told you in my former letter how unhappy I should be if you died, and if you love me you will moderate the rigours of your austere life. I represented to you the occasion I had for your advice, and consequently the reason there was you should take care of yourself;—but I will not tire you with repetitions. You desire us not to forget you in our prayers: ah! dear Abelard, you may depend upon the zeal of this society; it is devoted to you and you cannot justly fear its forgetfulness. You are our Father, and we are your children; you are our guide, and we resign ourselves to your direction with full assurance in your piety. You command; we obey; we faithfully execute what you have prudently ordered. We impose no penance on ourselves but what you recommend, lest we should rather follow an indiscreet zeal than solid virtue. In a word, nothing is thought right but what has Abelard's approbation. You tell me one thing that perplexes me—that you have heard that some of our Sisters are bad examples, and that they are generally not strict enough. Ought this to seem strange to you who know how monasteries are filled nowadays? Do fathers consult the inclination of their children when they settle them? Are not interest and policy their only rules? This is the reason that monasteries are often filled with those who are a scandal to them. But I conjure you to tell me what are the irregularities you have heard of, and to show me the proper remedy for them. I have not yet observed any looseness; when I have I will take due care. I walk my rounds every night and make those I catch abroad return to their chambers; for I remember all the adventures that happened in the monasteries near Paris.

You end your letter with a general deploring of your unhappiness and wish for death to end a weary life. Is it possible so great a genius as you cannot rise above your misfortunes? What would the world say should they read the letters you send me? Would they consider the noble motive of your retirement or not rather think you had shut yourself up merely to lament your woes? What would your young students say, who come so far to hear you and prefer your severe lectures to the ease of a worldly life, if they should discover you secretly a slave to your passions and the victim of those weaknesses from which your rule secures them? This Abelard they so much admire, this great leader, would lose his fame and become the sport of his pupils. If these reasons are not sufficient to give you constancy in your misfortune, cast your eyes upon me, and admire the resolution with which I shut myself up at your request. I was young when we separated, and (if I

dare believe what you were always telling me) worthy of any man's affections. If I had loved nothing in Abelard but sensual pleasure, other men might have comforted me upon my loss of him. You know what I have done, excuse me therefore from repeating it; think of those assurances I gave you of loving you still with the utmost tenderness. I dried your tears with kisses, and because you were less powerful I became less reserved. Ah! if you had loved with delicacy, the oaths I made, the transports I indulged, the caresses I gave, would surely have comforted you. Had you seen me grow by degrees indifferent to you, you might have had reason to despair, but you never received greater tokens of my affection than after you felt misfortune.

Let me see no more in your letters, dear Abelard, such murmurs against Fate; you are not the only one who has felt her blows and you ought to forget her outrages. What a shame it is that a philosopher cannot accept what might befall any man. Govern yourself by my example; I was born with violent passions, I daily strive with tender emotions, and glory in triumphing and subjecting them to reason. Must a weak mind fortify one that is so much superior? But I am carried away. Is it thus I write to my dear Abelard? He who practices all those virtues he preaches? If you complain of Fortune, it is not so much that you feel her strokes as that you try to show your enemies how much to blame they are in attempting to hurt you. Leave them, Abelard, to exhaust their malice, and continue to charm your auditors. Discover those treasures of learning Heaven seems to have reserved for you; your enemies, struck with the splendour of your reasoning, will in the end do you justice. How happy should I be could I see all the world as entirely persuaded of your probity as I am. Your learning is allowed by all; your greatest adversaries confess you are ignorant of nothing the mind of man is capable of knowing.

My dear Husband (for the last time I use that title!), shall I never see you again? Shall I never have the pleasure of embracing you before death? What dost thou say, wretched Heloise? Dost thou know what thou desirest? Couldst thou behold those brilliant eyes without recalling the tender glances which have been so fatal to thee? Couldst thou see that majestic air of Abelard without being jealous of every one who beholds so attractive a man? That mouth cannot be looked upon without desire; in short, no woman can view the person of Abelard without danger. Ask no more therefore to see Abelard; if the memory of him has caused thee so much trouble, Heloise, what would not his presence do? What desires will it not excite in thy soul? How will it be possible to keep thy reason at the sight of so lovable a man?

I will own to you what makes the greatest pleasure in my retirement; after having passed the day in thinking of you, full of the repressed idea, I give myself up at night to sleep. Then it is that Heloise, who dares not think of you by day, resigns herself with pleasure to see and hear you. How my eyes gloat over you! Sometimes you tell me stories of your secret troubles, and create in me a felt sorrow; sometimes the rage of our enemies is forgotten and you press me to you and I yield to

you, and our souls, animated with the same passion, are sensible of the same pleasures. But O! delightful dreams and tender illusions, how soon do you vanish away! I awake and open my eyes to find no Abelard: I stretch out my arms to embrace him and he is not there; I cry, and he hears me not. What a fool I am to tell my dreams to you who are insensible to these pleasures. But do you, Abelard, never see Heloise in your sleep? How does she appear to you? Do you entertain her with the same tender language as formerly, and are you glad or sorry when you awake? Pardon me, Abelard, pardon a mistaken lover. I must no longer expect from you that vivacity which once marked your every action; no more must I require from you the correspondence of desires. We have bound ourselves to severe austerities and must follow them at all cost. Let us think of our duties and our rules, and make good use of that necessity which keeps us separate. You, Abelard, will happily finish your course; your desires and ambitions will be no obstacle to your salvation. But Heloise must weep, she must lament for ever without being certain whether all her tears will avail for her salvation.

I had liked to have ended my letter without telling you what happened here a few days ago. A young nun, who had been forced to enter the convent without vocation therefor, is by a stratagem I know nothing of escaped and fled to England with a gentleman. I have ordered all the house to conceal the matter. Ah, Abelard! if you were near us these things would not happen, for all the Sisters, charmed with seeing and hearing you, would think of nothing but practising your rules and directions. The young nun had never formed so criminal a design as that of breaking her vows had you been at our head to exhort us to live in holiness. If your eyes were witnesses of our actions they would be innocent. When we slipped you should lift us up and establish us by your counsels; we should march with sure steps in the rough path of virtue. I begin to perceive, Abelard, that I take too much pleasure in writing to you; I ought to burn this letter. It shows that I still feel a deep passion for you, though at the beginning I tried to persuade you to the contrary. I am sensible of waves both of grace and passion, and by turns yield to each. Have pity, Abelard, on the condition to which you have brought me, and make in some measure my last days as peaceful as my first have been uneasy and disturbed.

ABELARD TO HELOISE

WRITE no more to me, Heloise, write no more to me; 't is time to end communications which make our penances of nought avail. We retired from the world to purify ourselves, and, by a conduct directly contrary to Christian morality, we became odious to Jesus Christ. Let us no more deceive ourselves with remembrance of our past pleasures; we but make our lives troubled and spoil the sweets of solitude. Let us make good use of our austerities and no longer preserve the memories of our crimes amongst the severities of penance. Let a mortification of body and mind, a strict fasting, continual solitude, profound and holy meditations, and a sincere love of God succeed our former irregularities.

Let us try to carry religious perfection to its farthest point. It is beautiful to find Christian minds so disengaged from earth, from the creatures and themselves, that they seem to act independently of those bodies they are joined to, and to use them as their slaves. We can never raise ourselves to too great heights when God is our object. Be our efforts ever so great they will always come short of attaining that exalted Divinity which even our apprehension cannot reach. Let us act for God's glory independent of the creatures or ourselves, paying no regard to our own desires or the opinions of others. Were we in this temper of mind, Heloise, I would willingly make my abode at the Paraclete, and by my earnest care for the house I have founded draw a thousand blessings on it. I would instruct it by my words and animate it by my example: I would watch over the lives of my Sisters, and would command nothing but what I myself would perform: I would direct you to pray, meditate, labour, and keep vows of silence; and I would myself pray, labour, meditate, and be silent.

And when I spoke it should be to lift you up when you should fall, to strengthen you in your weaknesses, to enlighten you in that darkness and obscurity which might at any time surprise you. I would comfort you under the severities used by persons of great virtue: I would moderate the vivacity of your zeal and piety and give your virtue an even temperament: I would point out those duties you ought to perform, and satisfy those doubts which through the weakness of your reason might arise. I would be your master and father, and by a marvellous talent I would become lively or slow, gentle or severe, according to the different characters of those I should guide in the painful path to Christian perfection.

But whither does my vain imagination carry me! Ah! Heloise, how far are we from such a happy temper? Your heart still burns with that fatal fire you cannot extinguish, and mine is full of trouble and unrest. Think not, Heloise, that I here enjoy a perfect peace; I will for the last time open my heart to you;—I am not yet disengaged from you, and though I fight against my excessive tenderness for you, in spite of all my endeavours I remain but too sensible of your sorrows and long to share in them. Your letters have indeed moved me; I could not read with indifference characters written by that dear hand! I sigh and weep, and all my reason is scarce sufficient to conceal my weakness from my pupils. This, unhappy Heloise, is the miserable condition of Abelard. The world, which is generally wrong in its notions, thinks I am at peace, and imagining that I loved you only for the gratification of the senses, have now forgot you. What a mistake is this! People indeed were not wrong in saying that when we separated it was shame and grief that made me abandon the world. It was not, as you know, a sincere repentance for having offended God which inspired me with a design for retiring. However, I consider our misfortunes as a secret design of Providence to punish our sins; and only look upon Fulbert as the instrument of divine vengeance. Grace drew me into an asylum where I might yet have remained if the rage of my enemies would have permitted; I have endured all their persecutions, not

doubting that God himself raised them up in order to purify me.

When He saw me perfectly obedient to His Holy Will, He permitted that I should justify my doctrine; I made its purity public, and showed in the end that my faith was not only orthodox, but also perfectly clear from all suspicion of novelty.

I should be happy if I had none to fear but my enemies, and no other hindrance to my salvation but their calumny. But, Heloise, *you* make me tremble, your letters declare to me that you are enslaved to human love, and yet, if you cannot conquer it, you cannot be saved; and what part would you have me play in this trial? Would you have me stifle the inspirations of the Holy Ghost? Shall I, to soothe you, dry up those tears which the Evil Spirit makes you shed—shall this be the fruit of my meditations? No, let us be more firm in our resolutions; we have not retired save to lament our sins and to gain heaven; let us then resign ourselves to God with all our heart.

I know everything is difficult in the beginning; but it is glorious to courageously start a great action, and glory increases proportionately as the difficulties are more considerable. We ought on this account to surmount bravely all obstacles which might hinder us in the practice of Christian virtue. In a monastery men are proved as gold in a furnace. No one can continue long there unless he bear worthily the yoke of the Lord.

Attempt to break these shameful chains which bind you to the flesh, and if by the assistance of grace you are so happy as to accomplish this, I entreat you to think of me in your prayers. Endeavour with all your strength to be the pattern of a perfect Christian; it is difficult, I confess, but not impossible; and I expect this beautiful triumph from your teachable disposition. If your first efforts prove weak do not give way to despair, for that would be cowardice; besides, I would have you know that you must necessarily take great pains, for you strive to conquer a terrible enemy, to extinguish a raging fire, to reduce to subjection your dearest affections. You have to fight against your own desires, so be not pressed down with the weight of your corrupt nature. You have to do with a cunning adversary who will use all means to seduce you; be always upon your guard. While we live we are exposed to temptations; this made a great saint say, "The life of man is one long temptation": the devil, who never sleeps, walks continually around us in order to surprise us on some unguarded side, and enters into our soul in order to destroy it.

However perfect any one may be, yet he may fall into temptations, and perhaps into such as may be useful. Nor is it wonderful that man should never be exempt from them, because he always hath in himself their source; scarce are we delivered from one temptation when another attacks us. Such is the lot of the posterity of Adam, that they should always have something to suffer, because they have forfeited their primitive happiness. We vainly flatter ourselves that we shall conquer temptations by flying; if we join not patience and humility we shall torment ourselves to no purpose. We shall more certainly compass our end by imploring God's

assistance than by using any means of our own.

Be constant, Heloise, and trust in God; then you shall fall into few temptations: when they come stifle them at their birth—let them not take root in your heart. "Apply remedies to a disease," said an ancient, "at the beginning, for when it hath gained strength medicines are of no avail": temptations have their degrees, they are at first mere thoughts and do not appear dangerous; the imagination receives them without any fears; the pleasure grows; we dwell upon it, and at last we yield to it.

Do you now, Heloise, applaud my design of making you walk in the steps of the saints? Do my words give you any relish for penitence? Have you not remorse for your wanderings, and do you not wish you could, like Magdalen, wash our Saviour's feet with your tears? If you have not yet these ardent aspirations, pray that you may be inspired by them. I shall never cease to recommend you in my prayers and to beseech God to assist you in your design of dying holily. You have quitted the world, and what object was worthy to detain you there? Lift up your eyes always to him to whom the rest of your days are consecrated. Life upon this earth is misery; the very necessities to which our bodies are subject here are matters of affliction to a saint. "Lord," said the royal prophet, "deliver me from my necessities." Many are wretched who do not know they are; and yet they are more wretched who know their misery and yet cannot hate the corruption of the age. What fools are men to engage themselves to earthly things! They will be undeceived one day, and will know too late how much they have been to blame in loving such false good. Truly pious persons are not thus mistaken; they are freed from all sensual pleasures, and raise their desires to Heaven.

Begin, Heloise; put your design into action without delay; you have yet time enough to work out your salvation. Love Christ, and despise yourself for His sake; He will possess your heart and be the sole object of your sighs and tears; seek for no comfort but in Him. If you do not free yourself from me, you will fall with me; but if you leave me and cleave to Him, you will be steadfast and safe. If you force the Lord to forsake you, you will fall into trouble; but if you are faithful to Him you shall find joy. Magdalen wept, thinking that Jesus had forsaken her, but Martha said, "See, the Lord calls you." Be diligent in your duty, obey faithfully the calls of grace, and Jesus will be with you. Attend, Heloise, to some instructions I have to give you: you are at the head of a society, and you know there is a difference between those who lead a private life and those who are charged with the conduct of others: the first need only labour for their own sanctification, and in their round of duties are not obliged to practise all the virtues in such an apparent manner: but those who have the charge of others entrusted to them ought by their example to encourage their followers to do all the good of which they are capable. I beseech you to remember this truth, and so to follow it that your whole life may be a perfect model of that of a religious recluse.

God heartily desires our salvation, and has made all the means of it easy

to us. In the Old Testament He has written in the tables of law what He requires of us, that we might not be bewildered in seeking after His will. In the New Testament He has written the law of grace to the intent that it might ever be present in our hearts; so, knowing the weakness and incapacity of our nature, He has given us grace to perform His will. And, as if this were not enough, He has raised up at all times, and in all states of the Church, men who by their exemplary life can excite others to their duty. To effect this He has chosen persons of every age, sex, and condition. Strive now to unite in yourself all the virtues of these different examples. Have the purity of virgins, the austerity of anchorites, the zeal of pastors and bishops, and the constancy of martyrs. Be exact in the course of your whole life to fulfil the duties of a holy and enlightened superior, and then death, which is commonly considered as terrible, will appear agreeable to you.

"The death of His saints," says the prophet, "is precious in the sight of the Lord." Nor is it difficult to discover why their death should have this advantage over that of sinners. I have remarked three things which might have given the prophet an occasion of speaking thus:—First, their resignation to the will of God; second, the continuation of their good works; and lastly, the triumph they gain over the devil.

A saint who has accustomed himself to submit to the will of God yields to death without reluctance. He waits with joy (says Dr. Gregory) for the Judge who is to reward him; he fears not to quit this miserable mortal life in order to begin an immortal happy one. It is not so with the sinner, says the same Father; he fears, and with reason, he trembles at the approach of the least sickness; death is terrible to him because he dreads the presence of the offended Judge; and having so often abused the means of grace he sees no way to avoid the punishment of his sins.

The saints have also this advantage over sinners, that having become familiar with works of piety during their life they exercise them without trouble, and having gained new strength against the devil every time they overcame him, they will find themselves in a condition at the hour of death to obtain that victory on which depends all eternity, and the blessed union of their souls with their Creator.

I hope, Heloise, that after having deplored the irregularities of your past life, you will "die the death of the righteous." Ah, how few there are who make this end! And why? It is because there are so few who love the Cross of Christ. Every one wishes to be saved, but few will use those means which religion prescribes. Yet can we be saved by nothing but the Cross: why then refuse to bear it? Hath not our Saviour borne it before us, and died for us, to the end that we might also bear it and desire to die also? All the saints have suffered affliction, and our Saviour Himself did not pass one hour of His life without some sorrow. Hope not therefore to be exempt from suffering: the Cross, Heloise, is always at hand, take care that you do not receive it with regret, for by so doing you will make it more heavy and you will be oppressed by it to no profit. On the contrary, if you bear it with willing courage, all your sufferings will create

in you a holy confidence whereby you will find comfort in God. Hear our Saviour who says, "My child, renounce yourself, take up your cross and follow me." Oh, Heloise, do you doubt? Is not your soul ravished at so saving a command? Are you insensible to words so full of kindness? Beware, Heloise, of refusing a Husband who demands you, and who is more to be feared than any earthly lover. Provoked at your contempt and ingratitude, He will turn his love into anger and make you feel His vengeance. How will you sustain His presence when you shall stand before His tribunal? He will reproach you for having despised His grace, He will represent to you His sufferings for you. What answer can you make? He will then be implacable: He will say to you, "Go, proud creature, and dwell in everlasting flames. I separated you from the world to purify you in solitude and you did not second my design. I endeavoured to save you and you wilfully destroyed yourself; go, wretch, and take the portion of the reprobates."

Oh, Heloise, prevent these terrible words, and avoid, by a holy life, the punishment prepared for sinners. I dare not give you a description of those dreadful torments which are the consequences of a career of guilt. I am filled with horror when they offer themselves to my imagination. And yet, Heloise, I can conceive nothing which can reach the tortures of the damned; the fire which we see upon this earth is but the shadow of that which burns them; and without enumerating their endless pains, the loss of God which they feel increases all their torments. Can any one sin who is persuaded of this? My God! can we dare to offend Thee? Though the riches of Thy mercy could not engage us to love Thee, the dread of being thrown into such an abyss of misery should restrain us from doing anything which might displease Thee.

I question not, Heloise, but you will hereafter apply yourself in good earnest to the business of your salvation; this ought to be your whole concern. Banish me, therefore, for ever from your heart—it is the best advice I can give you, for the remembrance of a person we have loved guiltily cannot but be hurtful, whatever advances we may have made in the way of virtue. When you have extirpated your unhappy inclination towards me, the practice of every virtue will become easy; and when at last your life is conformable to that of Christ, death will be desirable to you. Your soul will joyfully leave this body, and direct its flight to heaven. Then you will appear with confidence before your Saviour; you will not read your reprobation written in the judgment book, but you will hear your Saviour say, Come, partake of my glory, and enjoy the eternal reward I have appointed for those virtues you have practised.

Farewell, Heloise, this is the last advice of your dear Abelard; for the last time let me persuade you to follow the rules of the Gospel. Heaven grant that your heart, once so sensible of my love, may now yield to be directed by my zeal. May the idea of your loving Abelard, always present to your mind, be now changed into the image of Abelard truly penitent; and may you shed as many tears for your salvation as you have done for our misfortunes.

Profanation

About three and a half miles distant from Göttingen is a lake situated in a pleasant part of the Oakfield, between the hamlets of Seeburg and Berendshausen. It is deep, and even said to be bottomless, and embraces some three-quarters of a league in circumference.

In old time it did not exist. Where it now murmurs to the wind once rose the stately castle of the wealthy Count Isang, placed upon a gentle eminence. The last heir of this old and noble family was a young lord gifted with great personal advantages, but wild and dissolute to a degree. His father witnessed this disposition with regret, and when on his death-bed he called him to his side, fervently entreating his son to reform his conduct and to lead a better and a holier life.

But the impression this made was soon forgotten. Scarcely were his parent's remains consigned to their ancestral repose, and his grief somewhat abated, before he plunged into more extravagant excesses than ever. Rich, young, and handsome, fiery as he was unfettered, he set no bounds to his desires. With boon companions too, like himself, he spent the night in a constant round of wassalage and riot, while by day they were in the habit of intercepting the most beautiful among the wives and daughters of their neighbours, and carrying them either by entreaty or by force into Seeburg. In short, Count Isang soon became the dread of the surrounding district. As he rode through the peaceful hamlet, the maidens flew from his sight as from that of some sorcerer. Husbands barred their doors to protect their wives, and fathers their daughters, until the lordly monster and his train had ridden by. His father's former friends no longer approached the dwelling of his son, and no knight who valued honour and virtue reposed within the walls of Seeburg.

In this fatal course did he persevere for years, and he grew only more ungovernable as he felt its terrific inroads upon his health. On a time, as he sat surrounded by his infatuated compeers at his revels, he proposed an attack upon the nunnery of Lindau in order to despoil it of its heaven-devoted daughters; while instantly, with fiendish bursts of applause, his companions drank success to their attempt. On a stormy night, still more wild and awful from its pitchy darkness, the sacrilegious comrades met; they mounted felt-shod steeds, with their cloaks and swords; soon with crafty force they surprised the night watch, they won their way into the interior of the cloisters, and, like wolves within the fold, they were intent upon seizing the finest and most attractive victims of the flock. Having locked up the lady abbess, they continued to pursue her screaming nuns until the holy walls echoed to the cries and lamentations of its injured inmates, who, destitute of all assistance, were compelled to submit to their fate.

It was now Hermann, such was the name of Count Isang, determined to bear his prize back with him to his castle, where on his arrival the lady was taken in a state of insensibility from his horse. The abandoned monster did

not neglect the opportunity this afforded him of consummating his crime.

But conscience, always a disagreeable companion, that was prattling something unpleasant to him, now began to make itself heard. It may be subdued for a time, can even be compelled to silence; but it is still ever at work, like the hydra that shoots forth fresh heads, and whispers or clamours until it obtains a reply. Hermann had hitherto sufficient hardihood and dexterity to silence the reiterated reproaches addressed to him; yet from the period of this profanation of one of Heaven's innocent and devoted creatures, he felt that it was becoming too powerful and intractable for him. In some measure to appease it, he resolved to send back the victim of his violence to the cloister whence he had borne her.

He received a letter by return of his messenger. He perused, he dropped it from his hand with an expression of terror;—the injured nun was his own sister! Hermann had been informed by his father that he had a sister who had taken the veil, but he had refused to inform him where she dwelt; and this knowledge now fell upon him like a clap of thunder. Deep as he was dyed in crime, he was no longer proof against this; it came like a fatality of evil and it pierced his soul like a sharp sword. He wept and groaned with grief and rage; for many days he slept not, he caroused not. On the eighth day he went into a church and prayed; he bestowed rich gifts upon the violated cloister; presented it with the property of whole villages for the help of his sinful soul; and when he deemed he had made ample expiation in the way of appeasing the vengeance of Heaven, he returned to his former course of life with fresh zest. He indulged again all his usual propensities to the utmost, plunged into a sea of wine and pleasure; and if ever a good thought rose within his mind, it was stifled by the ridicule of other revellers, and in particular by one of his servants named Arnold, who rekindled the embers of his evil passions, in order to feast upon his master's ruin.

Wearied and palled with satiety lay Count Hermann one morning on his couch, yawning at the idea of another day. His head cook was summoned, and though he had long almost despaired of finding further means of pleasing his master's vitiated palate, he this time appeared with a fine silver white eel, just drawn from the water, in his presence.

"Look here," he cried, " my dreaded lord, see what our fisherman has brought from the castle brook to-day! a white eel, such as I have never beheld in all my life, grey-headed as I am. It is quite a wonderful thing."

Count Isang long examined the rare specimen before his eyes, doubting at first whether it was really an eel or some kind of snake. When, however, the experienced cook assured him that it was indeed an eel, it was the count's opinion that so singularly fine a fish must afford an equally uncommon relish.

Saying this, his jaded appetite seemed to revive, and he enjoined his cook to prepare the fish with his best skill, and with some fine strong sauce, for that day's dinner.

This was done. The fish was brought to table, and Count Isang, approving its flavour, partook of it with hearty zest.

The more he ate, the more he seemed to relish it, for the fish had certainly a most unusually agreeable flavour.

A small piece was all he left upon the dish, as his faithful domestic Arnold entered the room. "There, my good fellow," said his master, "you must have one taste of this excellent, wonderful fish." So Arnold ate, and found it extremely fine.

After dinner as Count Isang lay enjoying a soft slumber upon his couch, and Arnold also sat in his own room snoring loud, terrific dreams haunted the imagination of his lord. His limbs appeared as if shrunk with pain, his nerves were agitated, he uttered unintelligible words. He then cried out, leaped up, and awoke in frightful convulsions of remorse. The past again presented him with all its terrific scenes; a strange and unaccountable change came over him, while the long register of his sins, with all his varied treacheries, oppressions, and long-forgotten cruelties, along with all their hateful consequences, confronted him as in a picture. Unutterable anguish filled him at the sight; the pangs of conscience smote him; a freshly-kindled fire was felt burning within his breast. "My God," he cried, "what is this? Help, help!"

These words, uttered in an alarmed tone, brought some of his domestics to his side. All stood fixed with astonishment on beholding their master. His hair bristled up, his eyes rolled like those of a maniac, and he reeled as if intoxicated through the door, and to the castle gate, crying, "Air, air!" while the lofty walls of his castle echoed back the sound.

The whole of his courtly train gathered in alarm about him. But he seemed to hear and see no one, ran wildly round, then stood still, snatched at the air, as if wanting to dispel some viewless forms that threatened him, and next fled into the garden. In vain he thus sought to avoid the hated images that pursued him; they flew after him wherever he went. At this moment appeared a messenger from the cloister at Lindau. It was a letter from the abbess, which he hastily tore open and read: "Early this morning your unfortunate sister died. Her soul is now clamouring for justice against you, Count Isang, before the judgment-seat of God. Her death is the consequence of your sacrilegious and monstrous crimes. Her spirit departed in wild delirium, and her last words were, 'Woe, woe unto him!' Heaven have mercy on your soul."

These tidings smote Hermann to the earth; there he writhed in agony, and shrieked like one whose heart is suddenly pierced with a sharp knife.

"Horrible, horrible!" he exclaimed; "is there nothing to relieve this fiery pain—no one to take my abhorred life?"

His domestic spoke to him, raised him up, and tried to bear him back into his castle. With the strength of a giant he threw them from him, and commanded them to bring his sword; a command which none chose to obey. He then threatened to put them all to death if they persisted to refuse; still no one stirred.

"This, then, must be done, I find, by myself," he cried, as he prepared to go; but an invisible power detained him. He looked back. "Whose hand?" he exclaimed; but he saw nothing. His mo-

tions no longer remained in his own power; he raved and stormed, yet he felt himself guided by an unseen hand. At length the fever of his soul passed away in a kind of amazement, but an inward agony now seemed to tear his heart-strings asunder, without a hope of again losing itself in rage.

Thus with a slow and trembling step he crept down into the garden, and thence into the castle court. Here he found dogs, and cats, and birds of all kinds and number roaming about, and he seemed to catch a kind of muttering resembling the human voice. He felt astounded; for a moment seemed to resume his full recollection; and then he began to run after one of the hounds or the cats, stooped to try to catch a duck, then a pigeon; and so disappointed in the chase, he stretched out his hands in the air and wept bitterly. His attendants gazed on him in mingled surprise and terror; they knew not what to think, and only agreed that their lord had run stark mad. They could at most only surmise his disease; for they were not at all aware that from having partaken of the wonderful fish the count had acquired the gift of understanding the language of the animals around him; that even these were occupied in denouncing the crimes of their master, foretelling his approaching punishment, and the destruction of his stately castle. One of the old hens made known the vengeance that awaited him in the following words:

"Before to-morrow's sun has risen, your grand castle will be buried a thousand fathoms deep. Thou and all of us must meet our terrible fate; thou, stained with crimes alone, prepare thyself and pray."

So awaiting the final fulfilment of his destiny, Count Isang sat upon a stone before the portals of his rich palace. There where so often his friends had met, where like young vines they had shot up into barren luxuriance, where many a lovely maiden had been betrayed or sacrificed amid the din of riot and of wine, there he resolved to meet the closing scene of his existence, and recklessly fall, for ever buried under the ruins of his noble castle. The idea of safety or of flight never once occurred to him; all energy both of mind and body had forsaken him, as in silent rumination he resigned himself to his destruction, be it what it would.

Not a single one of his attendants being aware of the impending visitation could offer him a word of advice. They all stood sorrowfully, with their arms hanging listlessly down, at a distance, and gazing upon him with pity and curiosity to learn the result. It was then the cock crew, a favourite old bird with the count for the superior beauty of his plumage; he flew towards his master, clapped his wings, and crew to the following purport, which his master well understood. "My lord may still save himself by flight; mount then your swiftest steed and ere sunrise depart; but without any guide from the castle." "How! is that possible?" inquired Isang, hastily. "Now it is," replied the bird; "but be quick, the sun is already going down." "Cannot I contrive to save my trusty servant?" "No; alone, all alone; and quick haste away!" and here the faithful bird ceased to speak.

The same invisible power which had hitherto restrained the count's hand from suicide now urged him to preserve his life. He springs up, runs to his

stables, caparisoned his fleetest steed, and, to the surprise of all those he left behind, he rode rapidly through the castle gate. Pale and terrified, his servant Arnold ran and seized the reins of his bridle; for by the charm of the remaining part of the wonderful fish, he too could interpret the language of bird and beast; he had heard the fatal prophecy of the cock, and was unwilling that the count alone should save himself by flight. "My dear lord," he cried in breathless terror, "let me accompany you, let me mount your horse." "I cannot, I dare not," replied Count Isang. "You must; in God's name, let me along with you." "No, I say, I cannot; loose your hold!" Again the old house bird was heard to crow, crying, "Hasten, hasten! the sun sinks fast."

And already his departing beam shone on the top of the hill, while Count Isang, overpowered with terror lest his final hope should disappear at the same moment, and scarcely conscious what he did, dealt his faithful Arnold a fierce blow that split his skull asunder. Then away he went over the drawbridge, cleared the castle gates, and as soon as he reached a little eminence not far from the small town of Gieboldehausen, he threw himself from his horse in order to rest and dwell upon the strange occurrences of the day. He stretched his feeble limbs upon the earth, and with throbbing heart he gazed back, bitterly weeping, at the noble towers of his ancestors. All nature appeared far around him arrayed in the charm of a lovely evening. The larks poured their song above, a cool west breeze shook his dishevelled hair, and he saw the sun's last rays gilding the four beautiful turrets of his ancestral mansion. Young, yet aged in crime, fresh pangs of remorse awoke within him, and he wept, yet wept in vain.

Suddenly one consoling thought shot athwart the gloom of his soul. "Should all this," he exclaimed, "be the effect only of my own fancy!" And it brought with it a ray of hope; the mere possibility that all was delusion that had passed. He instantly attempted to rise with the view of returning to his castle, when at the instant he felt the earth beneath him tremble, and he reeled like a drunken man. Dreading lest the ground should open and engulf him alive, he rallied all his strength, abandoned his horse, and flew with the utmost speed from the spot. One moment only did he arrest his flight; it was to take a last view of his long-loved castle. He gazed wistfully towards the spot, and there he beheld it, with all its towers, walls, and ramparts, sinking deeper and deeper into the gaping earth, while in the site where it had stood instantly there flowed before his affrighted vision a stormy lake.

After this miraculous event, Count Isang hastened to expiate in the cloister of Gieboldehausen, as far as yet lay in his power, his manifold and deep-dyed sins. He endowed it with the remaining portion of his wealth, while he passed a severe and holy life, during the remnant of his days, within its walls. And long subsequent to that period, according to his express injunction, there was annually a day set apart for the purpose of reading masses for the relief of his soul and the final forgiveness of his sins.

Daughter of Don Manuel

Rounding the bend in the road, I came suddenly upon a group of men on horseback. It was a funeral party which had stopped for a little rest. I recognized some of the tenant farmers from the neighboring *haciendas*. Silent and motionless, they sat on their lean, perspiring horses. On their faces, tanned by the sun, half-concealed under blue cotton caps and wide-brimmed sombreros, there lingered an expression of somewhat conventional sadness, I might almost say of smiling drowsiness.

I could easily see that every one of these mourning riders was hopelessly intoxicated. The alcohol poured out to them freely in the course of the night-wake and again at daybreak, when the dead was being shrouded for burial, gave them a maudlin, stupefied aspect.

I rode up to one old fellow with a long gray beard, who I knew worked on a farm nearby. I asked him in a low voice:

"Whom are they burying?"

"It's Maiga, señor," he replied, removing his torn sombrero with a slow and respectful gesture, "the daughter of Don Manuel, who lives at the Three Corners."

I turned round in the saddle. There on the brown earth of the road was a bulky mass wrapped in a dirty, tattered cloth reposing on a large winnowing-basket. On the bundle near the middle they had fastened a small white cross fashioned of two pieces of poplar wood. A few steps away the bearers, seated on the ground, their sleeves rolled up, were smoking silently their cigarettes of dried leaves.

A little benumbed by the cold, I waited, silently gazing at that primitive hearse, at the black, stiff bundle, at those miserably poor peasants.

Maiga! Margarita! A woman's face loomed up in my memory. I had seen her once. It was a chilly, misty morning like this. I was returning home with a band of young roysterers and had stopped to drink a glass of brandy at the inn where the girl lived. I could still see her unkempt head of auburn hair, her heavy braids, her large brown eyes which she lowered at the *risqué* quips of my companions, courteously holding her tray and waiting for us to empty our glasses, smiling and a little self-conscious.

As I glanced once more at the sinister thing on the roadway, I noticed a pair of little shoes soiled with clay protruding from the black winding-sheet. Was it the stillness of that winter morning or that silent *cortège* of peasants which predisposed me to meditations? The fact is I stayed there on my horse watching every detail of the scene.

In the middle of the group two of the horsemen had left their saddles and stood near the corpse, holding their sombreros in their hands. One was Don Manuel, the owner of the inn at the Three Corners, whom his neighbors called *Skinflint*. He was an old man, thin and bent, with that general air of destitution and untidiness peculiar to old Chilean peasants. He wore a tattered cape, shoddy trousers much too short for him, and very muddy boots. His angular face, much in need of water and soap; his little beady, slant-

ing eyes; his eyebrows which he kept on raising with a nervous and mechanical motion; his spare, gray beard and the hard twitch with which he tightened his lips, all gave him a diabolical expression. He cast quick, searching glances in all directions as though continually surprised and wondering about the cause of all this disturbance. Now and then he would pass slowly over his head, swathed in a scarf with colored stripes, his heavy hand, the hand of a tiller of the soil.

The other man was a youth of twenty-two or -three, tall, slender, and gaunt, with a very dark complexion. His peasant's clothes, almost new, his small cape of vivid hue, his sombrero of fiber, his silver-plated spurs, and the kerchief of light silk tied around his neck stood out in striking contrast to the miserable garb of the other mourners. He stood motionless, his head bent, his arms hanging wearily at his sides. His eyes, reddened and dilated, stared persistently at the body, and glimmered like coals under his frowning brows. His bearded chin was shaken by repressed sobs. He held by the bridle a lanky, black mare whose head hung almost to the ground and which seemed to share her master's despair.

Suddenly the young man raised his head, directed his gaze toward some indefinite spot in the distance, and, sighing deeply, exclaimed in a loud voice:

"Maiga will never again see this land."

Then turning slowly toward the older man, his face convulsed by suffering, but somewhat lighted up by a wan smile, he added with a pained accent of reproach:

"Don Manuel, Don Manuelito, if you had only listened to me, this would not have happened. Don't you remember when I told you what I had——"

The old man turned away brusquely and replied in a curt, dry tone:

"What's the use of talking of that now?"

But the young man insisted gently: "Because today is the time to talk about it, Don Manuel. Because certain things must be said on this the last day. You knew very well that Maiga and I were betrothed."

The old man shook his head scornfully, mumbling between his teeth: "It was a fine gentleman I was going to give my daughter to." Then, raising his voice, he added ironically. "Since you want to talk so much, why don't you speak of your term in prison?"

The youth cast a fierce glance on the old man, a glance charged with scarcely suppressed anger, and he said in a low, threatening tone:

"Don Manuel, Don Manuel, don't force me to speak of those things."

Suddenly his eyes, bleared by alcohol and passion, rested on me. Then, waving his arms wildly, and with his head thrown back, he approached, stumbling, hampered by his long spurs. In the high-pitched and cracked voice of a drunkard, mad with anger, he cried out: "Señor, *caballero,* don't go. Listen, listen to me. Don Manuel wants to humiliate me. I am going to tell you what he has done."

He came close and with one arm awkwardly embraced the neck of my horse, gesticulating with the other. In a halting, monotonous fashion, he said:

"*Caballero.*—You can ask them all here if it is not true, what I am telling you. One day, while my father was still living, I went to see Don Manuel and said to him: 'Don Manuel, I have spoken of marriage to your daughter and I have come to find out if you are willing.'—At first he said, Yes—but afterwards, people began to come to his house, and Maiga sang for them and he saw that men were spending money at his place on her account. Then he said, No. I heard that the business was good, for many came for Maiga, and they were running after her and her father beat her because she wasn't nice enough to them. They told me that Manuelo would give his daughter to men for money.—My father was dead then.—Maiga wanted to come to me, but I wouldn't have her. And she longed for me and sent me messages to come and see her. Somehow, I always met her on the road. Very elegant she was then, and she smiled to me and wanted to talk to me. But my heart was broken. I just dug my spurs into my horse and rode faster, for she had done things that I couldn't abide. Then I sold all my belongings. And one day I knifed one of those fellows and then they put me in jail. That's what I have had to suffer on account of him, who sold his daughter and made me a disgraced man. And now, *caballero,* tell me if I have a right to shame that old man before the whole world, now that we are going to bury Maiga, who died of grief because I kept away from her and because she loved me——?"

He let his head drop violently against the neck of my horse, held desperately to the mane, and broke into a heart-rending, inarticulate moan. I pushed him aside gently and whipped my horse into a gallop.

Love Magic

Absorbed in his own thoughts, Emilius sat leaning his head upon the table, awaiting the arrival of his friend, Roderick. His lamp began to burn dim; it was a cold winter's evening, and he wishes his fellow-traveller would return, although, at one time, he had as earnestly avoided his society. The truth was, he had determined that evening to entrust him with a secret, and further solicit his advice in what way to act. The unsocial Emilius found, or rather imagined, so many difficulties, so many insurmountable obstacles in the commonest affairs and occurrences of life, that fortune seemed to have thrown him in Roderick's way out of a mere freakish ironical humour, as the latter afforded in every respect almost a ludicrous contrast to his poor friend. Volatile, affable even to flattery, influenced and determined by first impressions, Roderick undertook everything, was every one's adviser, thought nothing too difficult for him, and was least of all to be deterred from pursuing his object. Not so in prosecuting his undertaking to an end: he soon grew weary, and broke down almost as suddenly as he had first entered upon

his career. His elasticity and inspiration of ideas then forsook him; every little obstacle, instead of acting as a spur to incite him to greater efforts, induced him to relax them, and to undervalue the task which he had so warmly approved and commenced. Thus his plans lay all confused, without a motive and without conclusion; abandoned as weakly as they had been conceived. Hence, too, not a day passed without some difference of opinion arising between the two friends, which often seemed to threaten the continuance of their regard; yet this apparent hostility was perhaps the real bond which more intimately united them. They were, in fact, truly attached to each other, although both felt no little satisfaction in the idea that they had the best grounds in the world for complaining of each other's whims.

Emilius was a young man of fortune, of an enthusiastic, irritable, and melancholy temperament. He had early become master of his own time and property, had set out on a tour to enlarge his views, and had latterly spent some months in a celebrated city to enjoy the pleasures of the Carnival; about which, however, he in truth cared very little. Still, he had to meet the very significant expectations of his relations, whom he had scarcely ever visited, but who calculated upon splendid proofs of his great fortune in his future style of living. Meanwhile the fickle and busy Roderick urged him forward; for he had quarrelled with his guardians, and in order to rid himself altogether of their tedious admonitions, he had eagerly embraced the opportunity of accompanying his new friend upon his tour.

As they proceeded, indeed, they had often come to the resolution of separating; yet in every dispute, the more serious it semed to grow, the more sensibly did both feel, when they came to bid farewell, how impossible it was for them to part. They had barely alighted in any new city before Roderick protested he had already beheld all the most remarkable objects it contained, and which were forgotten before the next day; while Emilius devoted a full week to the examination of libraries, suffered nothing curious to escape him; leaving Roderick, meanwhile, to form a thousand acquaintances, visit a thousand places, and return with some of his new friends to invade his companion's quiet apartment. Nay, he would not scruple, when the company he had brought grew tiresome, to leave Emilius with them alone, and set out in quest of something fresh. Often, of a truth, he brought the reserved Emilius into the most cruel dilemma, by passing extravagant encomiums upon his merits and acquirements before learned and distinguished men, dwelling upon his familiarity with languages, antiquities, and the arts, upon all of which he was well qualified, he said, to give lectures to the most accomplished audience; yet the volatile wretch had never had even patience enough to listen to his friend when discoursing on any one of these subjects. Whenever Emilius once betook himself to active employment, his restless friend was sure to have engaged himself to some ball, or in some excursion on the sledge when his couch was certain, for that night, at least, to remain unpressed and Emilius, while travelling in the society of one of the liveliest, most rest-

tess, and sympathizing of beings, was left in complete solitude.

That day, however, Emilius looked for his arrival with confidence, as he had extorted the most warm and willing promise that he would spend this very evening with him, in order to receive an explanation as to the cause of his friend's evident anxiety and low spirits during some weeks past. Emilius meanwhile amused himself with penning the following lines upon a subject which filled all his thoughts:

How sweet and pure life's vernal gales,
When every bird that sings
Pours strains all like the nightingale's,
Till wood and valley rings,
And leaves and flowers tremble like breathing things!

How sweet in golden moonlit hours,
When evening airs first blow,
Through calm and fragrant linden bowers
To feel them as we go,
And hear their music with the streamlet's flow.

Serenely shines the rosy light,
When fay-rings deck the fields,
Love peeps from every rose of night,
From every star that yields
Its lamp to lovers, and their raptures gilds.

Yet sweeter, purer far to me
The pale light of that lamp,
Where in her chamber I may see
That face and form, whose stamp
Of beauty on my soul, nor time nor seasons damp.

Behold her white hand through the gleam
Unloose her lovely zone,
And let her auburn tresses stream
In luscious freedom down.
And from her fair brows take her rosy crown.

Hark! 't was the music of her lute—
Sweet notes might wake the dead
From every string, till through my mute
And listening soul their magic sped;
The light of mirth and joy, with griefs that bled.

Let me approach—near and more near.
In conscious honour bold,
Nor more depart until she hear
The tale I'd long have told,
And learn that love is all my hope—my world.

Emilius rose impatiently. It grew darker, and Roderick did not appear, much as he longed to confide to him his secret,—that of his attachment to a fair unknown who resided directly opposite, and who thus kept him night and day awake and at home. At last he heard footsteps on the stairs, his door opened without any preliminary knock, and two masks, of most revolting aspect, marched boldly in. One of these was a Turk, arrayed in red and blue silk; the other a Spaniard, in crimson with a mixed pale yellow, with fine waving feathers in his hat. Emilius expressing his impatience at this intrusion, his friend Roderick unmasked, displaying the same smiling countenance as usual, and exclaiming, "Lord! my poor friend, what a rueful face! Is that a face for the Carnival, think you? I have brought my young friend here to entertain you. There is a grand ball to-night in the masquerade-rooms, and as I well know that you have taken an oath not to go, except you wear mourning, which is your everyday habit—we are glad to find you

ready dressed; so you will go along with us; it is getting rather late."

Emilius, not a little irritated, replied, "It would seem that according to your habit, likewise, sir, you have broken your engagement to me this evening;" then turning towards the stranger, he added, "I am much concerned that it will not be in my power to accompany you, and my friend has been too hasty in engaging for me. Inded, it is quite out of the question, as I happen to have something of importance to communicate to him."

The stranger, aware of the meaning of this, instantly withdrew; Roderick resumed his mask, walked before the mirror, and said, "Is it not true? one looks quite hideous. Upon my honour it is a remarkable proof of ill taste; it is a notable discovery of mine." "There is no question of that: nothing new at all in caricaturing yourself, and running after the most absurd amusements; but perhaps you are possessed."

"This is all said in spite," said Roderick, " because you can't dance; because you consider it a most d——nably grievous offence; and so nobody must be merry. It is truly pitiable to see a man turn himself into a bundle of conceited prejudices." "It is certain," replied Emilius, in high dudgeon, "there is occasion enough for them, in reference to you; yet I was simple enough to believe, from what passed between us, that you would have given me the pleasure of your company for one short evening."

"True; but it is the Carnival," returned the other, "and all my acquaintance, with several ladies to boot, are expecting to see me at the grand ball. Only consider, my good fellow, that it is sheer sickness that gives you such an unreasonable aversion to all kind of fun." "I will not pretend to decide," retorted Emilius, "which of us is sick; but thy irreclaimable frivolity, thy determination to ruin thyself, thy mad pursuit of pleasure, with the elevation of thy head and the emptiness of thy heart, are, doubtless, no good symptoms of a sound mind. You would do well to imitate my weakness, as you call it, if such it be, in some things; and think with me, that there is nothing in the world so utterly intolerable as that mad riot called a ball, with all the frightful noise called its music. It has been truly observed that to the dumb, happily exempt from the nuisance, a ball appears a dance of bedlamites; but I am of opinion that this frightful music itself—this eternal harping upon a few notes in quick incessant repetition—in certain miscalled melodies, which really set all one's thoughts, I might add all one's blood, into commotion,—'confusion thrice confounded,'—so as to require no little time to recover from the injury; I say that all this must be downright folly and insanity; insomuch that, if dancing ought to be tolerated, it should be on conditions that there be no music; but both are intolerable."

"What a paradoxical wretch!" cried the Mask, in high good humour; "you have gone so far as to accuse the most natural, innocent, and delightful amusement in the world of absurdity, folly, and insanity." "I cannot account for it," continued his friend, more seriously, "how certain tones of music have made me feel unhappy from my childhood; even often reduced me to the brink of despair. To me the world of sound appears as if haunted with goblins, furies,

and all kind of ill spirits, which wave their wings over me and mock and mow in my face."

"Weak nerves,—blue devils all!" exclaimed his friend, "just like your abhorrence of spiders, and other innocent worms and creepers." "Innocent do you call them?" cried his irritated companion. "Yes, as long as they do not oppose you. To me, who indulge a feeling of utter repugnance at the sight of toads and spiders, and that most detestable of all ugly nondescripts, a bat; —to me, I say, they are like ferocious wild beasts; and you cannot deny but that their nature *is* strongly opposed to ours. Let unbelievers experience some of the phantoms of a sick man's dream, or behold some of Dante's pictures of terror, and declare that *they* are not horrible! How, in fact, should we rightly appreciate the forms of beauty itself, without detesting and wondering at the sight of these, so naturally and instinctively as it were opposed to them?"

"Why amaze us?" inquired Roderick, "why should the great world of water, for instance, present us with this terrific character, to which your ideas have become accustomed? why should not such objects more likely appear under an odd, entertaining, and ridiculous view, so that the whole province of nature should bear some resemblance to a well-furnished comic masquerade? Your whims, however, run yet further; for just in proportion as you would almost worship the rose, you are inclined to despise and detest other flowers; yet what has the fine yellow lily done, with so many of its other summer sisters? Some kind of colours, in the same way, displease you, some scents, and some sounds; yet you make no exertion to rise superior to such fancies, weakly giving way to them; insomuch that a bundle of such peculiarities will soon occupy the place which your egotism should possess."

Emilius was highly incensed at this language, but said not a word. He had already changed his mind in regard to entrusting Roderick with his secret, who, on his part, expressed no curiosity to hear it,—a secret which his gloomy companion had alluded to with so very important an air. He sat playing with his mask, in an arm-chair, in the most careless attitude, until, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he jumped up, exclaiming, "Oh, Emilius, be so good as to lend me your large mantle." "What for, sir?" inquired the other.

"I hear music in the church there over the way," replied Roderick, "and I have already let slip the opportunity several evenings; to-night I am well reminded, and I can disguise this fancy dress under your great mantle, mask and turban and all; then, as soon as it is finished, I can go to the ball."

The grumbling Emilius took the mantle from his drawers, gave it to his friend in the act of going, and forced himself to a kind of ironical smile.

"There," said Roderick, "is my Turkish scimitar for you, which I purchased yesterday" (covering himself at the same time with his mantle); "it is not good to carry so serious a weapon upon a fool's errand, not knowing to what purpose it may be misapplied, should a bit of a breeze, or any other pleasant adventure, afford an opportunity. Tomorrow we two meet again; until when farewell, and try to be content."

Neither waiting for nor receiving any answer, he ran down the steps.

Once more left alone, Emilius sought to remove his vexation by viewing his friend's conduct only in a ludicrous point of view. He examined the naked, elegantly wrought dagger, and said, "How must that man feel who is piercing his enemy's bosom with steel sharp as this, or who, still more, wounds a beloved object with it?" He then sheathed it; softly raised the sashes of his window, and gazed across the street. But he saw no light; all was gloom in the opposite house: the lovely form which dwelt there, and was accustomed, about this time, to be seen engaged in her little household affairs, had some way disappeared. "Perhaps she is at the ball!" thought Emilius, little as it appeared adapted to her usual secluded mode of life. Suddenly, however, there appeared a light, and the little attendant, who usually appeared along with his unknown beauty, approached the window-sashes with a lamp, and drew them up. A crevice, however, remained, which admitted a view of part of the room from the spot where Emilius stood, and where he was often rejoiced to stand until past midnight rooted to the ground. He watched each motion of her hand, every feature of his beloved, as if enchanted; and could have stood gazing for hours, when he saw her sit down, and begin to teach the little girl to read, to sew, or to knit. He had learnt from inquiry that the child was a poor orphan, of whom the lovely maiden had kindly taken charge, intending to give her an education. The friends of Emilius could not conjecture why he inhabited this narrow street, in an inconvenient house, appeared so little in any kind of society, and in what business he was occupied. Yet he was unoccupied, in solitude, and happy; except in as far as he accused himself of an unsocial, shy disposition, for not venturing upon a nearer intercourse with this beloved being, although she had frequently smiled upon and greeted him when she became aware of his notice. He little dreamed that, on her part, she was as deeply engaged with him. What wishes she cherished in her bosom, what difficulties, what sacrifices she felt herself capable of encountering, in order to insure the success of her hopes!

After pacing the room for some time, observing that the light along with the child had disappeared, he suddenly resolved, in spite of his want of inclination, to go to the ball, as it struck him that his fair unknown might chanced to have deviated, in this instance, from her usual style, and was gone to enjoy a little of the world and its vanities. The streets were just lighted up; the snow crumbled under his feet; the carriages rolled past him, and masks of the most opposite character whistled and jeered, and twitted him as they went by. From many a house came the detested music bursting upon his ear, and yet he could not contrive to find the shortest path towards the assembly-rooms. Crowds of persons in every direction were rushing, as if they were mad, to reach the desired spot. He approached the ancient church, looked wistfully at its old high towers frowning darkly through the dim midnight, and enjoyed the dreary stillness and solitude of the deserted place. He took his station in the recess of a large tower, whose variety and grandeur of architecture he had often admired, indulging his taste for

ancient art and the recollection of other times; and here, for some moments, he yielded himself up to the melancholy reflections which the scene inspired. Shortly, however, his attention was directed towards a strange figure, pacing to and fro in evident impatience and anxiety, as if expecting some one's arrival. By the light of a lamp burning before a figure of the Virgin, he could distinguish the features, and in particular the singular attire of this person. It was an old hag of the most revolting appearance, and the more remarkable, as she was seen in the act of stabbing at a scarlet bodice adorned with gold, in a wild manner, as if she were acting some mad part. Her robe was of a dark hue, and the cap she had on her head likewise sparkled with rich gems and gold. At first Emilius conjectured it to be some horrible kind of mask, one of those which, like himself, had missed his way; but he was soon convinced by the clear light that it was really an old, horrid, yellow wrinkled countenance, and no burlesque. Soon there appeared two men, both wrapped in mantles, approaching the place cautiously and slowly, and frequently looking round to observe whether any one was following them. The old hag went forward to meet them.

"Have you lights?" she inquired hastily, in a hoarse tone of voice. "Here they are," replied one of the men. "You know the price, and manage the affair right—right well."

The old creature then put money into one of their hands, which he seemed to be counting under his mantle. "I trust," she added, "that you will find them cast exactly after the same art and pattern, so that their workmanship will not appear."

"Don't be anxious," said the other, as he departed quickly, leaving his companion, a young man, with the strange-looking creature alone.

He took her hand, saying, "Is it possible, Alexia, that such forms and ceremonies, and such strange old sayings and invocations, in which I had never the smallest belief, can really control our free-will, and make us love and hate at their command?" "So it is," cried the old red-mantled wretch; "but all things must conspire together. Not merely those lights, dipped in blood and moulded in the new moon; not these magic forms and invocations. Many other potent charms are to be added to them, which the initiated well understand."

"Insomuch am I then beholden to you," said the stranger. "Tomorrow, after midnight, I shall be at your service," replied the old woman; "you will not have been the first who has found reason to repent of my acquaintance. To-day, as you have heard, I am occupied for another, upon whose whole mind and senses our art will work very powerfully." She laughed out, as if in triumph, as she pronounced these last words; and she and her companion then separated in different directions. Emilius shuddering stepped from his hiding-place, and fixed his eyes upon the image of the Virgin and child.

"Before thine eyes, most chaste and holy one," he involuntarily exclaimed, "have the evil ones broken off their hateful dialogue; yet separated only to pursue their vile and unlawful practices upon the reason and free-will of the innocent. Yet, as thou art yet seen, most

pure and lovely one, embracing thy tender child, so doth the power of invisible love protect us; and in joy as in sorrow, our heart turns towards that source of mightier strength and charity which is never known to desert its orphan children. Clouds pass over the spire of the tower, casting their shadows across this rude and massy pile. The eternal stars cast their soft and quiet rays, and seem to regard us with a tender power."

Emilius then turned from the nocturnal scene, and began to dwell upon the beauty of his beloved. He mixed once more with the crowds in the streets; gradually approaching nearer the bright and splendid ball-rooms, whence he could already catch the sounds of voices, rolling carriages, and, in certain pauses, the loud pealing notes of the music itself.

In the rooms, too, he was soon lost in the waves of a sea of beauty and fashion flowing to and fro; of dancers, masks, and mimes, elbowing him on all sides; while kettledrums and trumpets assailed his ear, insomuch that he hardly knew whether his waking life were not a dream. He pushed his way, however, through rows of fashionables, bent upon catching the eye of his own fair girl in every face he saw, with her bright brown tresses; and that night he longed more than usual to behold her. He secretly reproached her, at the same time, for mingling in such a scene, and thus rendering him guilty of the same folly.

"No," said he to himself, "no heart that truly loved could open its feelings to such emotions as here triumph in the woes they create: rank jealousy, and fears, and food for blood, mixed with the ranting mockery of wild music—such as drums and trumpets, fit only for murderous scenes, afford. Away! It is the murmur of the trees, the bubbling fall of waters, the burst of involuntary joy and song, filling the happy bosom with nature's sweetest pleasures,—this is the music for love. But this! this, alas! is more akin to the bold and raving tumult, the shouts of madness and despair."

He found not her whom he sought, and the idea of the beloved face being concealed under a mask made his search still more anxious and unprofitable. He had already traversed the hall three several times, and reviewed all the unmasked ladies whom he found seated—all in vain. Just then the Spaniard came up to him, and said, "It is amusing enough, indeed, to see *you* here, after all. You are, perhaps, seeking your friend?" No; Emilius had quite forgotten him; but replied in an embarrassed tone, "In fact I am surprised not to find him, for his mask is easily recognized."

"Do you know in what the whimsical gentleman is engaged, sir? He has neither danced nor remained long in the rooms, for he found here my friend Anderson, just arrived from the country. Their conversation turning upon literature, and the stranger being unacquainted with the new poem which lately appeared, Roderick took him aside into another room, where they are shut up together perusing it with great zest."

"Not at all unlikely," said Emilius; "for he follows nothing with so much pleasure as his own whims. I have tried every means, and even quarrelled with him more than once, to dissuade him from this extempore mode of life,—

from devoting his whole existence to sudden impromptus and to whims; but I fear they are so thoroughly engrafted in his nature, that I verily believe he would rather part with the best friend he has than with them. This identical work, which has so greatly taken his fancy, and which he everywhere carries about him, he began to read to me the other day. Yet he had scarcely got into its beauties and awakened some degree of interest, when, in spite of my entreaties that he would forbear, he suddenly sprang up, and tying on a cooking apron, he said he must instantly go and superintend the broiling of a beef-steak, in which he said he could instruct the first cook in Europe, although, indeed, he more frequently spoiled than broiled the beef-steak to my liking; and I protested I wanted to have the poem, and not the steak."

The Spaniard laughed. "Has he never been in love, then?" he inquired. "Yes! in his own way," continued Emilius, more seriously, "just as if he meant to make a farce of it; while he declared he was on the brink of despair, he was a sound man again in little more than a week."

They were here separated by the throng; and Emilius proceeded in search of his friend, whom he heard loud in argument—so loud as easily to lead him, from some distance, into the right chamber. "Lord! is one to believe one's own eyes?" he cried, as he saw Emilius approach. "It is very lucky, as I have just got to the place where I left off when we were interrupted; so you can sit down and listen."

"At present I am not in the humour," replied Emilius; "and I think this is no time nor place for such kind of entertainment." "Why not?" inquired Roderick; "we ought not always to listen to our humours, you know, Emilius; and every time is good to employ ourselves in so laudable a manner. But perhaps you had rather dance, Emilius? the ladies are in want of partners, and you may easily, at the expense of a pair of weary heels, a few hours gentle curvetting, become a favourite with them." "Adieu at present, skitterwit," returned his friend, with his hand on the door: "I am for home." "A word with you yet," cried Roderick, as his friend was going: "I am off early in the morning, with my companion here, on a few days' tour; though I promise you a call P.P.C. before we set out. Only if you should happen to be asleep, do not waken yourself merely to bid me good bye, for in three days I am with you again. That is one of the most extraordinary fellows," he continued, as Emilius left the room; "the most miserable, dull, serious —in fact, I cannot conjecture what is the matter with him. He takes no pleasure in anything—his name ought to have been Kill-joy. He must feel interested only in what he conceives noble, grand, magnanimous, with a dash of sympathy and the *lachrymose,* which he more especially looks for in a comedy. Were he at a puppet show which did not chime in with his ridiculous pretensions, he would assume the most tragical airs, and fall foul of the whole world, asserting that it contained nothing but what was crude, rude, and ridiculous. Under the humorous masks of old Pantaloon and Punchinello he expects to find the most preposterous fine feelings and lofty impulses, and will have Harlequin to philosophize with him upon the emptiness of all things. Then,

on finding himself disappointed, the tears start into his eyes, and he turns his back upon the motley good-humoured personages with an expression of anger and contempt." "Is he melancholy, too?" inquired Roderick's companion.

"No! not downright melancholy—only spoiled by his over-indulgent parents, and then by himself. He is accustomed to think and think, and feel and feel, with the due return and precision of ebb and tide; and when such thought or emotion did not return just as he expected, he shouted 'a miracle!' and offered a premium for the physical inquiry and discovery of so strange a phenomenon. He is the best fellow under the sun; but all attempts to remove his rooted perversity go for nothing; and if I would not wish to be insulted for my good opinion of him, I must warrant it." "He is, perhaps, in want of a physician?" said the other.

"But it is one of his peculiarities," replied Roderick, "to hold medicine in utter contempt. He opines that disease assumes an individual character in each respective subject, and is not to be treated according to general symptoms or established theories. He has more faith in sympathetic influences and the cures of old women. In the same way he despises in other respects everything we call order, moderation, and frugality. From childhood his favourite idea has been that of some noble character, and his chief aim to unite, as far as possible, such ideal excellence in himself with a lofty contempt of all things, more particularly of money. Thus, in order to avoid the least suspicion of being economical, he purposely dissipates it as fast as he can; so as to contrive, in spite of an immense income, to remain always poor; and is the ready tool of all those who choose to take advantage of this species of magnanimity to which he is so much attached. How to become his friend, and how to serve him, is the problem of all problems; for you have only to cough, to eat with too little dignity, or, most of all, to pick your teeth, in order to offend him mortally." "Was he never in love?" inquired the stranger.

"Whom should he love?" replied Roderick, "despising as he does all the daughters of Eve. Were he to detect his ideal fair in a fashionable dress or in the act of dancing, the sight would break his heart; perhaps he might die on the spot if she were so unlucky as to catch a cold."

Meanwhile Emilius had mixed in the crowd, when he suddenly felt himself attacked by that wild and strange feeling of anxiety and alarm which so often surprised him amidst a vast human throng, and seemed to pursue him as he fled from the assembly towards his own house. He paced the deserted streets with an eager desire to reach his chamber, and throwing himself into a chair, for the first time that evening felt some relief. His lamp was already extinguished; he bade his servant retire to rest, and seating himself in a musing posture, he began to ruminate upon the impressions made upon him by the ball—upon all he had that night seen and heard.

Wearied at length with thought, he went and looked out of his window, and there he beheld the bright vision in the chamber opposite—lovely as ever, her dark brown tresses streaming over her white neck and playing in a thousand

wanton folds. She was in a loose undress, and appeared engaged in some little domestic arrangements previous to retiring to rest. He observed her place two lighted tapers in two corners of the room, spread a white cloth over the table, and then retire. Emilius now yielded himself up to the most flattering dreams: the image of his beloved still stood arrayed in all her charms before his fancy, when, to his utter dismay, he beheld the frightful old red-hooded woman step quickly into the room. The bright gold shone quite terrific from her large haggard face and bosom, and cast a red glow, glaring still redder with the light, upon the wall. He turned away his eyes;—he looked again, and she was gone. Was he to believe his senses? Was it some illusion of the night, which his own heated and alarmed imagination had conjured up?

"Oh, no," he cried, "she is coming back more horrible than before!" for she had unlocked her grizzly, greyish-black hair, which hung in disorder over her back and breast; while the lovely girl followed, pale and disfigured, her beauteous bosom bare, her whole form most resembling a marble statue. Between them stood the pretty little child, which crept weeping close to the young woman, whose eyes were turned another way. But the timid creature stretched forth its hands, and caressed the lovely maiden's neck and cheeks, as if exhorting her protection against that fearful old woman. But in vain; her bony hand was already in its hair; in her other, she held a silver basin; and then murmuring some horrid words, she plunged a knife into its throat. Next there appeared to rise something out of the place behind them; neither, however, appeared to notice it, for both seemed then as much terrified as Emilius himself. It wound itself up in a spiral form, higher and higher, amid the gloomy light, and now appeared like a huge dragon, which crawled towards the dead body lying, still throbbing, in the old woman's arms: it sucked the red-flowing blood from the wound, and then fixed its dark green sparkling eye upon that of Emilius, through the open crevice which betrayed this terrific scene. That look suddenly shot through the frame, the brain, and heart of Emilius, and he fell senseless upon the ground. In this state he was found by Roderick several hours afterwards, on his return.

Time flew. It was a beautiful summer morning, and in the umbrageous shade of a pleasant garden sat a bright, gay, bridal party, looking and chattering pleasantly. Abundance of healths were drunk to the happiness of the handsome young couple, though neither were yet present. The bride was still busied with her maids at the toilet, while her lover was taking a delightful walk, meditating, doubtless, upon his exceeding good fortune, now drawing rapidly nigh.

"'Tis really a pity," cried Anderson, "that we have no music:—the ladies are sadly out of tune, for they never felt so irresistibly inclined to dance in all their lives,—because they must not,—as this very day. But, you know, music would be the death of him."

"Yet I can inform you," returned a young officer, "that we shall, nevertheless, have a ball; a right mad and riotous one too. Everything is in readiness; the musicians have secretly arrived, and taken up a safe and invisible position. Roderick has conducted the

whole proceedings; though he says we must none of us offer to interfere with, much less to pass any remarks upon his friend to-day, whatever maybe his odd humour. He is more kind and reasonable, I think, than he was," said the officer, "and on that account, I think too, the change of places will not prove disagreeable. Yet this sudden marriage is somewhat against one's expectations."

"There is only one opinion upon that. The tenour of his whole life," continued Anderson, "is as singular as his character. I believe you are all acquainted with his journey, last autumn, to visit our city. He spent the winter here, like an anchorite, secluded in his chamber the whole time; entering into no sort of amusements, not so much as going to the theatre. He very nearly quarrelled with his friend Roderick, for trying to amuse him and not being as miserable as himself. His irritability and eccentricity was, doubtless, for the most part disease; for, if you will recollect, he was seized with a horrid nervous fever, which had nearly carried him off, and hung upon him at least four months. When his imagination had raged itself to rest, he came to himself, but could recall nothing but his earlier years of childhood, his memory as to what had happened during his journey, and during his illness, having totally failed him. He did not even know his former friends, and it was long before Roderick himself could revive their acquaintance; until, by degrees, traces of past occurrences began to cast some dim glimmerings over his mind. His uncle had kindly taken him under his own roof, in order to attend personally to his wants, and treated him every way like his own child. When he first went to breathe the open air, on a mild spring day, in the park, he saw a young lady seated at a little distance from him, apparently absorbed in thought. She looked up, and her eyes met his; at the same moment, as if seized by an irresistible impulse, he stopped. He approached her, and taking both her hands in his, he burst into a flood of tears. His friends became again anxious for his reason; but henceforth he grew calmer, more cheerful, and more sociable. He soon announced himself to the parents of the lady, and requested her hand in marriage; a request which was complied with. He now felt happy, seemed to enjoy new life, and daily became stronger and more cheerful. About a week ago he arrived here on a visit to me; the country round appeared much to his taste; and, in fact, he would give me no rest until I agreed to sell him the estate. I might easily have turned his predilection for it to a good account; for whatever he sets his heart upon he will purchase at all risks; so we agreed, and he instantly determined upon taking up his abode here for the summer; and here we are all assembled at my old residence to celebrate our friend's nuptials."

This country seat was on a large scale and very pleasantly situated. On one side it overlooked a river, with hills in the distance; it was surrounded with fine plantations, and a garden, well stocked with the sweetest plants and flowers, in the centre. The orange and the citron shed their rich odours in the spacious hall. The range of rooms was noble and elegant, with only small side-doors, which led to the household establishment, well supplied with eating-rooms, cellars, &c. On the other side

opened a rich prospect of lawns and meadows, extending into a large park; while to each long and stately wing of the edifice was attached a large open court, whence from three rows of marble pillars, rose numbers of broad lofty steps, leading into the respective halls and chambers; which gave a very imposing as well as novel and pleasing air to the whole edifice; for on this side were seen a number of figures as you entered the porches, engaged in a variety of occupations, extending through the lofty rooms; while between the halls and the way to the respective chambers you met with others of every description, proceeding to and fro along the passages and noble corridors at pleasure. Of these, some were engaged at tea, others at play; while beyond the whole of these spacious apartments rose the aspect of a theatre, round which numbers of guests were lingering, in anticipation of the novel and charming entertainments in store for them.

The whole party of young people rose with an air of respect, as the lovely bride, richly adorned, approached them along the garden. She was dressed in violet-coloured velvet, with sparkling ornaments round her snow-white neck, while still more costly gold was thrown into stronger relief by her full, white, heaving bosom. Her dark auburn tresses were bound with a myrtle crown, mixed with other flowers, which seemed to gather fresh beauty from her looks. With a charming air she greeted all her guests; the young men standing in astonishment at her surpassing loveliness. She had been gathering flowers in the garden, with which she was returning, in order to inspect the progress of the approaching entertainments. The tables were spread in the long galleries; their rich covers of a dazzling white—their bright silver and glowing crystals, and vessels filled with all kinds of odoriferous flowers, seemed to lull the senses in a dream of delight. The ceilings were overhung with garlands of the choicest greens and flowers, resembling one grand bower, the charm of which was not to be described, as the blooming bride entered the gallery, winding her way through a Paradise of love and flowers. She was seen to proceed through the opposite doors, visiting the whole arrangements in the adjacent halls; and then mounting into the corridor, she went up the marble steps into her own chamber.

"By heavens!" cried Anderson, "there goes the most charming and exquisite creature, I think, I have even seen. Our friend is a very happy fellow, indeed."

"Yes, and I think," said the officer, "that her paleness heightens all her charms. How her dark hazel eyes lighten over her cheeks, and from under her dark tresses, giving her face so fine a relief; and then that moist warm redness of her ripe lips is surely something more than mortal; she has quite an irresistible, almost a magic air about her —something enchanting one cannot describe."

"It is that look of calm tender melancholy," replied Anderson, "which seems to invest her with more dignity."

The bridegroom now approached, and inquired for his friend Roderick, who had been missing some time, and no one could conjecture where he was. They all went in search of him. "He is in the hall below," said a young man whom they met, "busily engaged with some of the domestics, showing them some new tricks at cards." They proceeded

to the spot, and surprised the great domestic oracle, who proceeded, however, with his magical evolutions, to the astonishment of the whole admiring household. When he at length concluded, he agreed to go with his friends into the garden, observing, "I only do this to strengthen the rascals' faith; for the art I have displayed will make some impression upon these free-thinking jockeys, and tend to their conversion."

"So I find," said the bridegroom, "that in addition to his other talents, my friend does not despise the fame of a charlatan, odd as it may appear." "Yes, we live in wonderful times," rejoined the other; "one ought, in fact, to despise nothing now, for we never know how soon it may prove useful to us."

When Roderick and his friend were at last left to themselves, the latter turned into a shady walk, observing, "How strange that I should feel so low and odd on such a day as this! Yet I assure you, Roderick, of a truth, whatever you may think, that it is quite too much for me to mingle in this vast throng—to notice each and all of my guests; to omit not a single one of my old and new relatives; to pay respect to the old people, compliments to the ladies, welcome the coming, speed the going, and dispatch messengers for everything in all directions."

"Oh!" replied Roderick, "all this is done of itself; your household is right well stocked and ordered; your house-steward keeps all hands and all legs in exercise, and everything proceeds in a way to reach the consummation of all good cheer, without confusion of dishes or of guests: the whole hostship will go off with an air and a grace; depend upon your old steward and your young bride for that."

"I was walking this morning," said Emilius, "before sunrise in the woods; I felt keenly and deeply how decided a step I had taken—how this new connexion had given me a vocation and a home. I at last approached near yonder bower: I heard voices—it was my beloved girl's in confidential dialogue with some one. 'Has it not happened,' said the stranger, 'just as I foretold it would? You have your wish, and therefore rest content.' I did not venture to disturb them, though I approached nearer to listen: the next moment they were both gone. Yet I keep thinking what could be the meaning of those words?" Roderick said, "Perhaps she may have long loved you without your knowledge—you are so much the happier."

One of the latest nightingales here began its song, as if inviting the young bridegroom to thoughts of rapture and approaching night. Emilius grew more serious. "Come with me," cried his friend, "into the neighbouring village, and I will soon make you cheer up. There you shall see a bridal pair; for you must not imagine you are the only happy fellow on earth this blessed day. A young page has fallen into the snares of an ugly elderly sort of *soi-disante* maid, who first seduced and is now going to marry the young simpleton. Both by this time are decked out for sacrifice: we really must have a peep at them—it will be truly an edifying sight."

The serious bridegroom was prevailed upon by his amusing friend, and they hastened to the little cottage. The rural procession was just then preparing to

go to church. The young fool was dressed in his ordinary day's frock—only sporting a pair of leather gaiters, which he had newly brushed for the occasion. His features were of the simple cast, and he looked rather out of place. The bride had a fine sunburnt skin; she bore few traces of her younger days, looked coarse and poor, though withal neatly arrayed. She wore red and blue ribbons, somewhat worse for wear, which flew like mill-sails round her head-dress; which last was built up stiff and high, by means of fat and flower and kitchen skewers, which rose like threatening horns for her unlucky helpmate out of her forehead; while a grand garland crowned the tower of paste upon her head. She laughed and looked very frolicsome, as those do that win, yet withal was a little pale and abashed. The old relatives followed: his father, still a court page, whose hat and coat bore sufficient witness to his poverty. A miserably attired musician brought up the wake of this miserable show, scraping upon his wretched fiddle, to which he added, gratis, as wretched a voice. His instrument was half parchment, half wood, and, instead of strings, enforced the harmony derived from three pieces of packthread. The procession halted at the sight of the gracious gentleman's approach. There was a party of bold young rustics, amusing themselves with satirical touches and rural jokes at the expense of the wedded pair, in which the young pages, in particular, as more ingenious and accomplished, bore a shining part. Emilius almost shuddered and turned away; he looked at Roderick, who was already making his escape. An impudent varlet, bent upon displaying his wit, called out to Emilius, "Well, good gentleman, and what say you to this flaming bridal pair? The poor rogues are somewhat dashed at the idea of wanting a dinner to-morrow; but they have mettle, sir, and they are going to give us a grand ball to-night—all in the first style." "No bread?" cried Emilius; "is it so indeed?"

"Oh," said another, "everybody knows their poverty; but the rogue says that life is a good thing, though he got nothing. Oh, yes, truly, love is all-in-all. The ragamuffin has no bed to lie upon; but what of that? there is straw; and the happy pair have begged enough of strong liquor to drown their cares."

The whole rustic audience laughed aloud at this sally, while the unlucky objects of it cast down their eyes, evidently much hurt and abashed.

Emilius thrust the unfeeling jester aside: "Here, take it," he cried, and gave the bridegroom some hundred ducats, which he had put into his pocket that morning. The bridal pair and the old people at sight of this cried out and wept aloud, throwing themselves at their benefactor's feet. But Emilius wished to get away. "There," he cried "keep want at a distance as long as you can."

"Oh! for ever, for ever, my good, most gracious sir," echoed all the relations at a time.

Emilius hardly knew how he had escaped, but he was once more alone, and bent his steps towards the wood. He sought out one of his most secluded spots, and threw himself upon a green hillock, while he there gave free course to his tears.

"Yes! I abhor life," he cried in painful emotion. "I cannot be happy and content—I will no longer try! Receive me, O my mother earth, receive me in

thy soft cool arms; protect me from the wild beasts that dog my footsteps—protect me from mankind. God in heaven!" he exclaimed, "how have I deserved to array myself in silk, and lie upon down—that the grape should pour its richest juice—that all around should vie, as it were, in offering homage and respect to me? Why, that poor wretch is nobler and better than I, though misery be his nurse, and scorn and bitter mockery his only portion. I feel each precious morsel, and each luscious glass at table, like the commission of some sin; reposing on a downy couch, and wearing soft apparel and ornaments of fine gold, while thousands and millions of naked, hungry, and thirsting wretches are driven at the world's frown—poor outcasts from house to house. Oh! yet, I promise you, ye long-tried, long-suffering, insulted brotherhood of misfortune—stretched upon your couch of straw, with a sack round your loins for raiment—I would rather encounter your privations and your wanderings, to expiate my indulging sins, than feast at the tables of the rich, whose profusion might afford you all full competence, joy, and peace."

The poor enthusiast saw everything float before him, as in a dream: he resolved to unite his fate with the unfortunate, and abandon his more happy companions for ever. The party had been long expecting him in the hall, the bride was become anxious, and her relations were in search of him throughout the gardens and the park. At length, however, the mourner returned, more composed for the very tears he had shed, and the splendid entertainments were begun. The party proceeded from the halls below into the table galleries, to take their places for the feast. The bride and bridegroom led the way, at the head of a grand procession, among whom Roderick had given his arm to a very lively and conversable young lady.

"What can be the reason," she inquired, "of the bride's sad looks? the tears started into her eyes as she came into the gallery with Emilius." "Because," replied Roderick, "she is at this moment about to enter upon the most important and mysterious change, perhaps, that can occur during life."

"Yet of all brides I ever saw," continued his fair companion, "she surpasses them in solemnity; she looks particularly pale and melancholy; if you will observe, she never really laughs, nor even smiles." "This confers so much the more honour upon her heart and feelings, as it is opposed to her usual custom. You are not acquainted, perhaps, lady, with her previous conduct. Some years since, she took charge of a little orphan girl, in order to educate her. She devoted her whole time to this tender task, finding her sole reward in her young charge's improvement and attachment to her. When about seven years of age, she had the misfortune to lose this adopted child as she was one day walking through the city; and notwithstanding all her exertions to recover her, all the rewards held out, she was no more heard of. This accident preyed so much upon the lovely creature's mind, that she has never since recovered her usual cheerfulness, and even yet sighs for the loss of her pretty little playfellow."

"It is truly very interesting," said Roderick's companion; "it may give rise to something very romantic;—an excellent foundation, either for a poem or a romance."

The company now arranged itself at the tables; the bride and bridegroom occupying the middle places, commanding a view of the lovely prospect without. Mirth and good cheer went hand-in-hand; toasts were drunk, and all were soon in high good humour—more especially the relations of the young bride. The bridegroom alone appeared still reserved, saying and partaking of little, and even starting as he heard the voice of music burst upon his ear. Yet he soon recovered his presence of mind with the softer notes of a distant horn from beyond the gardens, which resounded among the trees, and the far-off mountains beyond the park. Roderick had himself stationed the musicians in the rooms over their head, and his friend expressed himself satisfied with the arrangement. Towards the close of the banquet, Emilius summoned his house-steward, and turning to his bride, said, "Suppose, my beloved, we share some portion of our superfluity with the hungry and the destitute?" He then gave orders for a quantity of provisions, wine, and fruit, to be sent to the unlucky pair he had that morning seen, in order that they might celebrate their intended feast, and have occasion to hail the return of their marriage-day with a feeling of pleasure.

"Now see, my friend," cried Roderick, "how happily things are connected in this world. That very frivolity and folly which you so often charge me with, has given rise to this same charitable embassy."

Many present were desirous of criticising their host's prudence and misplaced confidence on this occasion, while the bride was about to say something noble and sentimental in his favour.

"For Heaven's sake, be quiet," cried Emilius, in a scornful tone: "it is nothing worth mentioning—it is nothing good, nothing bad; nothing in the whole proceeding. If the birds around us are permitted to pick up the crumbs thrown from the windows, and carry them to their young, surely there can be no harm in allowing a wretched fellow-creature to glean some portion of the same superfluity. Were I to venture to follow the dictates of my own heart, you would all ridicule me, as you would any other people, who were to seclude themselves in a desert, in order to experience nothing more of the world and its generosity."

All were silent, and in the sparkling eye of his friend Roderick detected the utmost displeasure and disdain. He sought, therefore, to calm his feelings by turning to other topics, though without succeeding in withdrawing Emilius from his uneasiness and abstraction. His looks were often directed towards the gallery above, where some of the domestics who occupied the highest floors were engaged in various occupations. At length he observed, after a long pause, to his bride, "Who can that peevish old woman be, making herself so very busy coming and going—her I mean in the grey cloak?" "Oh!" replied the bride, "she belongs to my household, and is doubtless keeping an eye upon the younger domestics and maidens engaged in different employments."

"But how can you bear such a disagreeable-looking old creature in your

service so near your person?" replied Emilius. "Oh! let her wear her ugly looks as long as she lives," replied the young bride, "provided she can be useful to us, for she is so active and honest."

The guests now rose from table, surrounding the lovely pair, and offering up fresh wishes for their happiness. They then pressed, with much ardour, to be permitted to hold the ball: the bride even threw her fair arms around him, and beseeching said, "Surely my beloved will not refuse me this simple boon, which we have all along anticipated: it is so long since I danced—and I think you never saw me dance: have you no curiosity to see how I can acquit myself?" "I think I never saw you so merry, lady; and Heaven forbid that I should mar your enjoyment. No; do as you please—and permit me. I have no desire to render myself voluntarily ridiculous by bounding and curvetting and linking feet and hands."

"Why, if you are a bad dancer," she replied, laughing, "depend upon it, nobody will think of troubling you." Having said this, the bride left him to attend to her toilet and make preparations for the ball.

When Emilius too had retired, as well as many of the ladies, to attend to their ball dresses and summon their maids, Roderick invited the young men to accompany him to his apartment. "It will soon be evening," he said; "certes, it is already twilight, and we are none of us dressed. Quick, let us dispatch! for to-night we will, once in our lives, be as smart, as jovial, and as mad as we list. Whatever takes you into the head, my pretty fellows, that do without restraint—the worse the better, say I. The more extravagant your whims, the more will I commend you for your folly. There be no hunchbacks so ugly—no goblin, and no mask, with no disguises and conceits so villanous, that shall not be practised and paraded this blessed night. A marriage, gentlemen, is so wonderful an occurrence—the parties find themselves so suddenly metamorphosed, when the yoke with Cupid's speed is suddenly thrown around their necks—that we cannot render such a festival as this too absurd and strange, in order somewhat to excuse the sudden revolution in the young wedded pair's affairs; so that, being still madder than they, we may lull them in a soft elysian dream, and withdraw their minds from the consequences of their folly, by showing ourselves at open war with all moderation and common sense."

"Be at peace," cried Anderson, "let us to work; you shall find no reason to complain. We have brought with us a huge parcel of masks, and all kind of mad motley dresses, such as will excite your admiration, I think."

"But first behold," cried Roderick, "what I have purchased from my tailor, who was just on the point of cutting it up into lappets. Yes, I was in time to redeem this dress, which he received from the hands of an old godmother, who doubtless, had it from the shop of Lucifer, fashioned somewhere on the Blocksberg by Galla. Survey with all your eyes this scarlet red apron, fringed with golden lace, and this gold-studded cap, which I shall ever continue to revere. Add to which this green silk gown, with saffron embroidery, and this

terrific mask—arrayed in all which I propose, in the shape of an old woman, to guide the whole troop of caricatures into the bridal chamber. Make all dispatch you can, and we will then proceed to escort the young bride to the ballroom, with all due pomp and circumstance of fun."

The musical horns were yet playing; part of the company wandered about the gardens, and part were seated in the house. The sun had just set behind a mass of dark clouds, the prospect lay half visible in the grey twilight; when suddenly, from out the gathered clouds, there shot a bright beam, which streaked the prospect around, but more especially the whole edifice, with its walks, and marble pillars, and flowery ornaments, as with streaks of red blood.

The relations of the bride, and the rest of the spectators on the spot, witnessed this very singular sight as it hovered over the corridor above. Then came Roderick, heading his procession of masks and mimes, huge monsters in wig and gown, fierce goblins, Punchinellos, and wild female figures, with long tresses and sweeping garments, along with the most terrific figures,—that of Roderick himself, as old Red Riding-hood, a frightful old woman, being none of the least—and almost resembling some phantasma or hideous dream. Soon they spread themselves hooting and leaping about, starting from doors and passages in the domestics' faces, and again vanishing from sight. A few of the spectators had just sufficiently recovered their surprise to enter into the joke, and laughed aloud; when suddenly there burst a real fearful cry from the inmost chambers—and there rushed forth, seen in the red glaring light of dying evening, the pale distracted bride in short white garments, all embroidered with flowers, her beautiful bosom bare, and her tresses sweeping loose in air. Next, like one in raging passion, with rolling eyes, and his features sternly fixed, came Emilius, with the naked Turkish dagger in his hand, pursuing her across the gallery, where in her terror and confusion she found no outlet, and flew to the opposite side. Just as she reached it and could go no farther, he overtook her, before the grey old woman and the masks could reach the spot. Seizing her by the hair, he pierced her bosom and her white neck through and through, and her blood flowed rapidly, seen in that same red light of evening that shone so portentous just before. The old hag had by this time wound her arms around him, to tear him back; struggling with her fiercely, he came nigher and nigher, and suddenly slipped over the lofty banisters several stories high, and both fell together with horrid crash, down at the very feet of the relations of the bride, who had witnessed the bloody spectacle. They were nearly dashed to atoms in the fall! Above and below, through hall and court and corridor, were seen the horrid feaures of ghosts and goblins, in the shape of masks, who ran howling and weeping over the terrific catastrophe, like demons just loosened from their dark abode.

Roderick took his dying friend in his arms. He had found him in his bride's chamber playing with the dagger. She was nearly dressed; but the sight of the hateful red cloak had kindled the bridegroom's fancy afresh, and the rec-

ollection of that fatal night again occurred. Instantly he threw himself upon the trembling bride, who escaped from his grasp, in order to avenge the murder he had seen, and punish her for her hateful and diabolical arts. The old hag likewise confessed the murder before she expired, and a whole house of joy was turned into a scene of mourning, tears, and terror.

The Garden of Maria

THERE was no doubt. The tavern of Paco was well known throughout the whole country-side. The sign "Meles are sirved" and "Lickers" was prominent in front of the tavern. This was sufficient to infuse misgivings into anybody. For one could scarcely expect many culinary or courtly graces from a man who possessed so few orthographic ones. The villagers thereabouts, however, were imbibers of proven capacity, and it would have made very little difference to them whether the liquor had a "k" or a mosquito mixed in it. Therefore Señor Paco succeeded admirably in his business.

But at Señor Paco's tavern the goods dispensed were of minor importance. The best thing that establishment had was its grounds. Behind the hostelry itself there was an orchard, also belonging to the innkeeper. This orchard was separated by a small mud wall from a garden which, though by no means remarkable for its flowers, was remarkable for its mistress. The garden was attached to the house of Maria Antonia, the neatest girl in the village, a queenly creature. Her like, perhaps, may have been often met before by those well versed in feminine æsthetics, but to the people of the little village, she seemed the goddess Venus in human form. In truth there was considerable beauty in this bit of rural feminity, her strong and well-built form, her cheeks flaming with almost too much color, but fresh and wholesome. Beneath these cheeks flowed the turbulent and burning blood of twenty summers. Hers was a face of rustic beauty that seemed to diffuse a perfume. Between her and city girls there was all the difference between the fragrance of the forest and that of a perfume shop.

Maria Antonia delighted in air and sunshine, sharers and protectors of her beauty. She used to spend almost every day in her garden. Señor Paco's orchard, therefore, was a strategic point of the utmost importance for a suitor of Maria Antonia. Therefore Señor Paco was not surprised when one day Joselito, son of one of those great Madrid families that used to pass the summer in the village, presented himself in the tavern. Calling him aside, Joselito said:

"Listen, friend. That orchard of yours behind the house can be of great service to me. If you will allow me free entrance to it whenever I desire, you will not regret it. You know who I am."

The tavern-keeper raised his shoulders and put his head on one side as though

saying: "There is no need to speak of that. We all know that you are a millionaire."

Joselito drew out his pocketbook and threw upon the table a bank note for a hundred dollars, saying:

"There is my card. Of course this is only the prologue. If you serve me well many papers like this will pass from my purse to yours. Is it a go?

"No question about it. Come with me. I will show you how to get into the orchard so that you may enter from now on whenever you like, even though I should be absent.

They went along a path that smelled of old musty things, where the tavern-keeper kept the heaped-up remains of wine-barrels and useless furniture. As soon as they reached the door that opened on the orchard Señor Paco, discreet man that he was, withdrew, leaving Joselito a clear road to the heart of Maria Antonia. The rustic beauty was watering some pinks close by the garden wall.

The bargain for the little orchard suited the tavern-keeper admirably. Joselito was as good as his word. The bank notes repeated themselves like enchantment.

Joselito called on Maria Antonia every afternoon. As far as she was concerned, however, the affair did not get beyond a semi-witty badinage, joyous, somewhat noisy, but certainly not at all serious. She permitted herself to be loved, she allowed herself to be admired, let slip a tender glance or an encouraging word but nothing more definite.

Perhaps she was soon influenced by the fact that Joselito, although a millionaire, was as ugly as any common mortal, wizened, marked by smallpox, four fingers shorter in stature than she was herself, with an incipient baldness that seemed to the girl highly ludicrous. Impossible to love such a man! But why not pass the time listening to him! And pass it fairly well, too, for the mouth of her lover was a perpetual spring of compliments and tender phrases. What woman does not like to hear such things, even from the lips of a phonograph?

Soon, as often happens (but do not make a note of this, fair maids who read), the coldness and indifference of Maria Antonia fanned the flame in Joselito's heart from caprice into a real passion. Joselito put all his strength into making Maria Antonia love him. Maria Antonia for her part smiled and smiled, but would not surrender.

About this time there came to the village a native of South America, Don Santiago, laden with gold and posing as a conquering hero. In Matanzas, so he said, many women were languishing for love for him. No doubt the space taken up in his trunk by his money may have unduly influenced many hearts across the ocean.

He saw Maria Antonia and fell in love with her or pretended to. Certain it is that, looking over the shoulder of Joselito and deeming him to be a rival beneath his notice, he decided to pay attention to the girl. But how begin? With the help of the tavern of Señor Paco, of course. That was the natural point of departure, the inevitable base of operations, the bridge which led to the region where reigned the rustic beauty. And thither went our fine gentleman.

"You will not, of course," he said to

Señor Paco, "deny me entrance to the garden through your tavern?"

"But there is——"

"There is another man who has this permission? I know that. For that very reason I can have it also. You will not regret it. The money that I have made in America dollar by dollar I know how to spend, when necessary, bagful by bagful. I will give you twice as much as that little fop."

"But.—You understand that I cannot now prevent Don Joselito's also entering——"

"Nor do I desire you to. Let him come or not. It is all one to me. Indeed, I do not look upon him in the light of a competitor at all. At what hour does he generally come?"

"From three to five."

"Then I shall come from five to seven. Here, take this as a proof of the kind of a man I am." And the South American threw upon the counter a bank note for two hundred dollars. These disappeared beneath the hands of the señor in the twinkling of an eye.

The following day the latter said to Joselito: "You will excuse me, Don Joselito, but,—but—another gentleman, Don Santiago, the South American, also wishes to be allowed to pass through the orchard to talk with Señorita Maria Antonia——"

"And?"

"And since he pays well.—You see, I am poor, and business is bad, and one cannot despise chances to make a little money."

"As far as paying goes I shall certainly not be behind, and less than ever now that the little South American fellow dares to oppose me. Did he ask you to prevent my using the tavern?"

"No, señor, no. He says that it makes no difference to him whether you enter or not. He does not look upon you in the light of a rival and expects to supersede you quicker than a cock can crow."

"Did the jackass say that? Listen—neither do I care a straw about him. Let him enter the orchard at all hours."

"Indeed, I shall let him! Since, without depreciating anybody, Don Santiago is generous as a prince. He pays in a kingly manner."

"From today on I shall give you twice as much as he does. If that *parvenu* thinks he can outdo me—! Take this and see the kind of man Don Joselito is when it is a question of his dignity." And a bundle of bank notes passed from the hands of the little gentleman into those of the tavern-keeper.

The lovers' contest was prolonged for some time, for Maria Antonia lent ear to both and did not seem to lean towards either. Everyone in the village commented on the struggle. They made guesses, even bets, as to which would win in the extraordinary combat.

"In the end, Maria Antonia," said some, "will marry Don Santiago."

"Nonsense," replied others, "she is going to marry Don Joselito and that very soon, too."

These two phrases like two war banners divided the village from end to end.

"She will marry Don Joselito."

"She is going to marry Don Santiago."

In truth, however, Maria Antonia married the tavern-keeper, who had become rich at the expense of the little gentleman and the South American.

You Lie!

CHAPTER I

"You lie! I know you lie!"

"What are you shouting for? Is it necessary that every one should hear us?"

And here again she lied, for I had not shouted, but spoken in the quietest voice, holding her hand and speaking quite gently while that venomous word "lie" hissed like a little serpent.

"I love you," she continued, "and you ought to believe me. Does not this convince you?"

And she kissed me. But when I was about to take hold of her hand and press it—she was already gone. She left the semi-dark corridor, and I followed her once more to the place where a gay party was just coming to an end. How did I know where it was? She had told me that I might go there, and I went there and watched the dancing all the night through. No one came near me, or spoke to me, I was a stranger to all, and sat in the corner near the band. Pointed straight at me was the mouth of a great brass instrument, through which some one hidden in the depths of it kept bellowing, and every minute or so would give a rude staccato laugh: "Ho! ho! ho!"

From time to time a scented white cloud would come close to me. It was she. I knew not how she managed to caress me without being observed, but one short little second her shoulder would press mine, and for one short little second I would lower my eyes and see a white neck in the opening of a white dress. And when I raised my eyes I saw a profile as white, severe, and truthful as that of a pensive angel on the tomb of the long-forgotten dead. And I saw her eyes. They were large, greedy of the light, beautiful, and calm. From their blue-white setting the pupils shone black, and the more I looked at them the blacker they seemed, and the more unfathomable their depths. Maybe I looked at them for so short a time that my heart failed to make the slightest impression, but certainly never did I understand so profoundly and terribly the meaning of Infinity, nor ever realised it with such force. I felt in fear and pain that my very life was passing out in a slender ray into her eyes, until I became a stranger to myself—desolated, speechless, almost dead. Then she would leave me, taking my life with her, and dance again with a certain tall, haughty, but handsome partner of hers. I studied his every characteristic—the shape of his shoes, the width of his rather high shoulders, the rhythmic sway of one of his locks, which separated itself from the rest, while with his indifferent, unseeing glance he, as it were, crushed me against the wall, and I felt myself as flat and lifeless to look at as the wall itself.

When they began to extinguish the lights, I went up to her and said:

"It is time to go. I will accompany you."

But she expressed surprise.

"But certainly I am going with him," and she pointed to the tall, handsome man, who was not looking at us. She

led me out into an empty room and kissed me.

"You lie," I said very softly.

"We shall meet again to-morrow. You must come," was her answer.

When I drove home, the green frosty dawn was looking out from behind the high roofs. In the whole street there were only we two, the sledge-driver and I. He sat with bent head and wrapped-up face, and I sat behind him wrapped up to the very eyes. The sledge-driver had his thoughts, and I had mine, and there behind the thick walls thousands of people were sleeping, and they had their own dreams and thoughts. I thought of her, and of how she lied. I thought of death, and it seemed to me that those dimly-lightened walls had already looked upon my death, and that was why they were so cold and upright. I know not what the thoughts of the sledge-driver may have been, neither do I know of what those hidden by the walls were dreaming. But then, neither did they know my thoughts and reveries.

And so we drove on through the long and straight streets, and the dawn rose from behind the roofs, and all around was motionless and white. A cold, scented cloud came close to me, and straight into my ear some one unseen laughed.

"Ho! ho! ho!"

CHAPTER II

She had lied. She did not come, and I waited for her in vain. The grey, uniform, frozen semi-darkness descended from the lightless sky, and I was not conscious of when the twilight passed into evening, and when the evening passed into night—to me it was all one long night. I kept walking backwards and forwards with the same even, measured steps of hope deferred. I did not come close up to the tall house, where my beloved dwelt, nor to its glazed door which shone yellow at the end of the iron covered-way, but I walked on the opposite side of the street with the same measured strides—backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards. In going forward I did not take my eye off the glazed door, and when I turned back I stopped frequently and turned my head round, and then the snow pricked my face with its sharp needles. And so long were those sharp cold needles that they penetrated to my very heart, and pierced it with grief and anger at my useless waiting. The cold wind blew uninterruptedly from the bright north to the dark south, and whistled playfully on the icy roofs, and rebounding cut my face with sharp little snowflakes, and softly tapped the glasses of the empty lanterns, in which the lonely yellow flame, shivering with cold, bent to the draught. And I felt sorry for the lonely flame which lived only by night, and I thought to myself, when I go away all life will end in this street, and only the snowflakes will fly through the empty space; but still the yellow flame will continue to shiver and bend in loneliness and cold.

I waited for her, but she came not. And it seemed to me that the lonely flame and I were like one another, only that my lamp was not empty, for in that void, which I kept measuring with my strides, there did sometimes appear people. They grew up unheard behind my back, big and dark; they passed me, and like ghosts suddenly disappeared round the corner of the white building.

Then again they would come out from round the corner, come up alongside of me and then gradually melt away in the great distance, obscured by the silently falling snow. Muffled up, formless, silent, they were so like to one another and to myself that it seemed as if scores of people were walking backwards and forwards and waiting, as I was, shivering and silent, and were thinking their own enigmatic sad thoughts.

I waited for her, but she came not. I know not why I did not cry out and weep for pain. I know not why I laughed and was glad, and crooked my fingers like claws, as though I held in them that little venomous thing which kept hissing like a snake: a lie! It wriggled in my hands, and bit my heart, and my head reeled with its poison. Everything was a lie! The boundary line between the future and the present, the present and the past, vanished. The boundary line between the time when I did not yet exist, and the time when I began to be, vanished, and I thought that I must have always been alive, or else never have lived at all. And always, before I lived and when I began to live, she had ruled over me, and I felt it strange that she should have a name and a body, and that her existence should have a beginning and an end. She had no name, she was always the one that lies, that makes eternally to wait, and never comes. And I knew not why, but I laughed, and the sharp needles pierced my heart, and right into my ear some one unseen laughed:

"Ho! ho! ho!"

Opening my eyes I looked at the lighted windows of the lofty house, and they quietly said to me in their blue and red language:

"Thou art deceived by her. At this very moment whilst thou art wandering, waiting, and suffering, she, all bright, lovely, and treacherous, is there, listening to the whispers of that tall, handsome man, who despises thee. If thou wert to break in there and kill her, thou wouldst be doing a good deed, for thou wouldst slay a lie."

I gripped the knife I held in my hand tighter, and answered laughingly: "Yes, I will kill her."

But the windows gazed at me mournfully, and added sadly: "Thou wilt never kill her. Never! because the weapon thou holdest in thy hand is as much a lie as are her kisses."

The silent shadows of my fellow-watchers had disappeared long ago, and I was left alone in the cold void, I—and the lonely tongues of fire shivering with cold and despair. The clock in the neighbouring church-tower began to strike, and its dismal metallic sound trembled and wept, flying away into the void, and being lost in the maze of silently whirling snowflakes. I began to count the strokes, and went into a fit of laughter. The clock struck 15! The belfry was old, and so, too, was the clock, and although it indicated the right time, it struck spasmodically, sometimes so often that the grey, ancient bell-ringer had to clamber up and stop the convulsive strokes of the hammer with his hand. For whom did those senilely tremulous, melancholy sounds, which were embraced and throttled by the frosty darkness, tell a lie? So pitiable and inept was that useless lie.

With the last lying sounds of the clock the glazed door slammed, and a tall man made his way down the steps

I saw only his back, but I recognized it as I had seen it only last evening, proud and contemptuous. I recognized his walk, and it was lighter and more confident than in the evening: thus had I often left that door. He walked, as those do, whom the lying lips of a woman have just kissed.

CHAPTER III

I THREATENED and entreated, grinding my teeth:

"Tell me the truth!"

But with a face cold as snow, while from beneath her brows, lifted in surprise, her dark, inscrutable eyes shone passionless and mysterious as ever, she assured me:

"But I am not lying to you."

She knew that I could not prove her lie, and that all my heavy massive structure of torturing thought would crumble at one word from her, even one lying word. I waited for it—and it came forth from her lips, sparkling on the surface with the colours of truth, but dark in its innermost depths:

"I love thee! Am not I all thine?"

We were far from the town, and the snow-clad plain looked in at the dark windows. Upon it was darkness, and around it was darkness, gross, motionless, silent, but the plain shone with its own latent coruscation, like the face of a corpse in the dark. In the overheated room only one candle was burning, and on its reddening flame there appeared the white reflection of the deathlike plain.

"However sad the truth may be, I want to know it. Maybe I shall die when I know it, but death rather than ignorance of the truth. In your kisses and embraces I feel a lie. In your eyes I see it. Tell me the truth and I will leave you for ever," said I.

But she was silent. Her coldly searching look penetrated my inmost depths, and drawing out my soul, regarded it with strange curiosity.

And I cried: "Answer, or I will kill you!"

"Yes, do!" she quietly replied: "sometimes life is so wearisome. But the truth is not to be extracted by threat."

And then I knelt to her. Clasping her hand I wept, and prayed for pity and the truth.

"Poor fellow!" said she, putting her hand on my head, "poor fellow!"

"Pity me," I prayed, "I want so much to know the truth."

And as I looked at her pure forehead, I thought that truth must be there behind that slender barrier. And I madly wished to smash the skull to get at the truth. There, too, behind a white bosom beat a heart, and I madly wished to tear her bosom with my nails, to see but for once an unveiled human heart. And the pointed, motionless flame of the expiring candle burnt yellow—and the walls grew dark and seemed farther apart—and it felt so sad, so lonely, so eery.

"Poor fellow!" she said. "Poor fellow!"

And the yellow flame of the candle shivered spasmodically, burnt low, and became blue. Then it went out—and darkness enveloped us. I could not see her face, nor her eyes, for her arms embraced my head—and I no longer felt the lie. Closing my eyes, I neither thought nor lived, but only absorbed the touch of her hands, and it seemed to me true. And in the darkness she

whispered in a strangely fearsome voice:

"Put your arms round me—I'm afraid."

Again there was silence, and again the gentle whisper fraught with fear!

"You desire the truth—but do I know it myself? And oh! don't I wish I did? Take care of me; oh! I'm so frightened!"

I opened my eyes. The paling darkness of the room fled in fear from the lofty windows, and gathering near the walls hid itself in the corners. But through the windows there silently looked in a something huge, deadly-white. It seemed as though some one's dead eyes were searching for us, and enveloping us in their icy gaze. Presently we pressed close together, while she whispered:

"Oh! I am so frightened!"

CHAPTER IV

I KILLED her. I killed her, and when she lay a flat, lifeless heap by the window, beyond which shone the dead-white plain, I put my foot on her corpse, and burst into a fit of laughter. It was not the laugh of a madman; oh, no! I laughed because my bosom heaved lightly and evenly, and within it all was cheerful, peaceful, and void, and because from my heart had fallen the worm which had been gnawing it. And bending down I looked into her dead eyes. Great, greedy of the light, they remained open, and were like the eyes of a wax doll—so round and dull were they, as though covered with mica. I was able to touch them with my fingers, open and shut them, and I was not afraid, because in those black, inscrutable pupils there lived no longer that demon of lying and doubt, which so long, so greedily, had sucked my blood.

When they arrested me I laughed. And this seemed terrible and wild to those who seized me. Some of them turned away from me in disgust, and went aside; others advanced threateningly straight towards me, with condemnation on their lips, but when my bright, cheerful glance met their eyes, their faces blanched, and their feet became rooted to the ground.

"Mad!" they said, and it seemed to me that they found comfort in the word, because it helped to solve the enigma of how I could love and yet kill the beloved—and laugh. One of them only, a man of full habit and sanguine temperament, called me by another name, which I felt as a blow, and which extinguished the light in my eyes.

"Poor man!" said he in compassion, although devoid of anger—for he was stout and cheerful. "Poor fellow!"

"Don't!" cried I. "Don't call me that!"

I know not why I threw myself upon him. Indeed, I had no desire to kill him, or even to touch him; but all these cowed people who looked on me as a madman and a villain, were all the more frightened, and cried out so that it seemed to me again quite ludicrous.

When they were leading me out of the room where the corpse lay, I repeated loudly and persistently, looking at the stout, cheerful man:

"I am happy, happy!"

And that was the truth.

CHAPTER V

ONCE, when I was a child, I saw in a menagerie a panther, which struck my imagination and for long held my

thoughts captive. It was not like the other wild beasts, which dozed without thought or angrily gazed at the visitors. It walked from corner to corner, in one and the same line, with mathematical precision, each time turning on exactly the same spot, each time grazing with its tawny side one and the same metal bar of the cage. Its sharp, ravenous head was bent down, and its eyes looked straight before it, never once turning aside. For whole days a noisily chattering crowd trooped before its cage, but it kept up its tramp, and never once turned an eye on the spectators. A few of the crowd laughed, but the majority looked seriously, even sadly, at that living picture of heavy, hopeless brooding, and went away with a sigh. And as they retired, they cast once more round at her a doubting, inquiring glance and sighed—as though there was something in common between their own lot, free as they were, and that of the unhappy, eager wild beast. And when later on I was grown up, and people, or books, spoke to me of eternity, I called to mind the panther, and it seemed to me that I knew eternity and its pains.

Such a panther did I become in my stone cage. I walked and thought. I walked in one line right across my cage from corner to corner, and along one short line travelled my thoughts, so heavy that it seemed that my shoulders carried not a head, but a whole world. But it consisted of but one word, but what an immense, what a torturing, what an ominous word it was.

"Lie!" that was the word.

Once more it crept forth hissing from all the corners, and twined itself about my soul; but it had ceased to be a little snake, it had developed into a great, glittering, fierce serpent. It bit me, and stifled me in its iron coils, and when I began to cry out with pain, as though my whole bosom were swarming with reptiles, I could only utter that abominable, hissing, serpent-like sound: "Lie!"

And as I walked, and thought, the grey level asphalt of the floor changed before my eyes into a grey, transparent abyss. My feet ceased to feel the touch of the floor, and I seemed to be soaring at a limitless height above the fog and mist. And when my bosom gave forth its hissing groan, thence—from below—from under that rarifying, but still impenetrable shroud, there slowly issued a terrible echo. So slow and dull was it, as though it were passing through a thousand years. And every now and then, as the fog lifted, the sound became less loud, and I understood that there—below—it was still whistling like a wind, that tears down the trees, while it reached my ears in a short, ominous whisper:

"Lie!"

This mean whisper worked me up into a rage, and I stamped on the floor and cried:

"There is no lie! I killed the lie."

Then I purposely turned aside, for I knew what it would reply. And it did reply slowly from the depths of the bottomless abyss:

"Lie!"

The fact is, as you perceive, that I had made a grievous mistake. I had killed the woman, but made the lie immortal. Kill not a woman till you have, by prayer, by fire, and torture, torn from her soul the truth!

So thought I, and continued my endless tramp from corner to corner of the cell.

CHAPTER VI

DARK and terrible is the place to which she had carried the truth, and the lie—and I am going thither. At the very throne of Satan I shall overtake her, and falling on my knees will weep; and cry:

"Tell me the truth!"

But God! This is also a lie. There, there is darkness, there is the void of ages and of infinity, and there she is not—she is nowhere. But the lie remains, it is immortal. I feel it in every atom of the air, and when I breathe, it enters my bosom with a hissing, and then rends it—yes, rends!

Oh! what madness it is—to be man and to seek the truth! What pain!

Help! Help!

The Message

I HAVE long been wishing to relate this true, simple story. On hearing which, a young man and his mistress were seized with such terror that they rushed into each other's arms, like two children clinging closer at the sight of a serpent on the border of a wood. At the risk of lessening the interest of my tale or appearing conceited, I must first state the purpose of my story. I played a part in this almost commonplace drama—if it fail to interest you, it will be as much my fault as that of my narrative. Many true things are supremely dull. Hence, one half of talent consists in selecting from the true what may be made poetic.

In 1819, I was traveling from Paris to Moulins. The state of my purse made it necessary for me to take my seat on the outside of the diligence. You know the English say these are the best places in a coach, and during the early stages of the journey I found abundant reasons to indorse this opinion of our neighbors. A young man who appeared to be more favored by fortune than I was, therefore from choice no doubt also mounted on the outside, and sat down beside me. He listened with an inoffensive smile to my arguments. By and by a certain conformity of age, mind, our enjoyment of the broad, open air, of the varied aspects of the country as they unfolded themselves in the progress of our cumbrous vehicle, lastly a kind of indefinable magnetic attraction, brought about that sort of momentary intimacy to which travelers all the more willingly abandon themselves, seeing this ephemeral feeling must apparently soon come to an end and involves nothing for the future. Before we had proceeded sixty miles we had discussed woman and love, with all requisite oratorical precautions we naturally talked of our own mistresses. Both being still young, we had got no further than the woman of *a certain age*, the woman between thirty-five and forty. Oh! had a poet been listening to us, from Montargis to I don't know what stage, what burning expressions, what enchanting portraits, what de-

licious secrets he would have carried away! Our chaste fears, murmured interjections, our still bashful looks had an eloquence the simple charm of which I have never since found again.

To understand youth, we must needs be young ourselves, and so on all the essential points of passion we intuitively understood each other. First of all we began by laying down as a principle, that nothing in the world can be more inane than a certificate of birth; many women of forty are younger than certain women of twenty, and that, in short, women are really only the age they look. This system fixed no term to love, and so in all sincerity we pulled our oars in a limitless ocean. Finally, after showing our mistresses were young, charming, loving, countesses, full of taste, wit, and refinement, after giving them pretty feet, skins as fair and soft as satin, and even delicately perfumed, we owned to each other—he, that Madame So-and-so was thirty-eight; and I, on my side that I adored a woman of forty. Thereupon, both of us feeling delivered from a sort of vague fear, we began our confidences anew, discovering we belonged to the same brotherhood in love, it was who should give the greatest proof of feeling. On a certain occasion one had gone three hundred miles to see his mistress for an hour. The other had risked being taken for a wolf and shot in a park in order to keep a nocturnal rendezvous. In short, we went over all our follies! If there is pleasure in the memory of past dangers, surely there is delight in the memory of vanished joys. Is it not enjoying them twice over? We told everything—our dangers, our great and little episodes of good fortune—all; even our fun and frolics. My friend's countess had smoked a cigar to please him; mine had made my chocolate and never passed a day without writing to me or seeing me; his had spent three days at his house at the risk of ruining her reputation; mine had done still better, or worse if you like. Besides, our husbands adored our countesses, inthralled by the charm all loving women exercise; and with more fatuity than common, imparted just savor enough of danger to enhance our pleasures. Oh! how the wind quickly wafted away our words and quiet laughter.

On arriving at Pouilly, I scrutinized my friend's appearance. Assuredly there was no difficulty in believing he was the object of a serious attachment. Figure to yourself a young man of middle height, of most symmetrical proportions, with a charming physiognomy full of expression. His hair was black, his eyes blue, his lips a faint rose color, his teeth white and perfectly even; a slight pallor set off his delicate features, and there was a faint dark circle around his eyes as though he were a convalescent. Add to this he had white, finely modeled hands as carefully trimmed as should be those of a pretty woman—he appeared thoroughly well informed, was *spirituel*—and you will have no difficulty in agreeing with me that my companion might do credit to a countess. Many a girl would covet him for a husband—he was a viscount, had a good income, besides expectations.

At a couple of miles from Pouilly the diligence capsized. My unfortunate companion, to save himself, leaped down upon the edge of a freshly plowed field instead of holding on to the seat, and following the swing of the diligence as

I did. He either made a false spring or slipped. I don't know how the accident occurred, but he was crushed by the coach, which fell on him. We carried him to the house of a peasant. Amid the groans which his agonizing tortures forced from him he gave me one of those missions to fulfill, to which the last wishes of a dying man impart a sacred character. In his agony the poor fellow, with that simplicity one is so often the victim of at his age, was miserable at the thought of the shock it would give his mistress were she first to hear of his death through a newspaper. He implored me to break it to her. Then he asked me to take a key that was hung on a ribbon he wore round his neck. I found it imbedded in his flesh. The dying man made not the faintest moan as I drew it out with all the care I could from the wound it had made. He had hardly finished giving me the necessary instructions enabling me to find in his house at La Charite-sur-Loire the letters his mistress had written to him and which he entreated me to return to her, when the power of speech failed him midway in a phrase. His last sign was to make me understand that the fatal key would be the token of my mission to his mother. Wretched at being unable to utter a single word of thanks, for he had no doubt of my zeal, he looked at me for a moment with a supplicating eye, bid me adieu by a silent gesture, then bowed his head and died. His death was the only fatal accident occasioned by the upsetting of the coach. Moreover, said the conductor to me, a little of it was his own fault.

At La Charite I executed the verbal testament of my unfortunate fellow-traveler. Fortunately for me his mother was absent. But I had to endure the pain of witnessing the grief of an old servant, who was stunned when I announced the death of her young master; she fell half dead when I produced the key still stained with his blood, but as I was preoccupied by the more bitter anguish of a woman whom fate had robbed of her last love, I left the old housekeeper to her lamentations, and carried away the precious packet, which had been carefully sealed up by my one day's friend.

The chateau in which the countess lived was upward of sixteen miles distant from Moulins, and to reach it in time I had to walk through some private grounds. I had considerable difficulty in discharging my message. For a number of reasons needless to explain, I had only money enough to take me to Moulins. Nevertheless, with the enthusiasm of youth, I resolved to make my way on foot, and to do this with such expedition as would insure me being beforehand of any rumor of bad news, which we know has the reputation of traveling fast. I inquired the shortest road, and set out along the footpaths of the Bourbonnais, laden, as it were, with a dead body on my shoulders. As I drew near the chateau, I felt more and more perplexed at the notion of the strange pilgrimage I had undertaken. My imagination teemed with a thousand romantic passions. I pictured to myself all the situations in which it was possible to meet Madame de Montpersan or, according to the poetry of romance, the beloved *Juliet* of the young traveler. I prepared *spirituel* answers to questions I supposed should be addressed to me At each turn of the wood, at each dip

of the road, it was a repetition of the scene of Sosie and his lantern as he gave it an account of the battle. To the disgrace of my heart I thought at first only of my demeanor, of the wit and skill I should exhibit, but as I drew near the neighborhood a thought flashed through my mind like a thunderbolt breaking a veil of gray clouds. What tidings were these I was bringing this woman, absorbed in the thought of her friend, looking forward from hour to hour to unspeakable joys, after her endless pains to bring him legitimately to her house. Still there was a certain cruel charity in being thus the messenger of death, and I hastened on, bespattered and knee-deep in the mud of the roads of the Bourbonnais. At last I reached a spacious avenue of chestnut-trees, at the end of which, looming out against the sky like a mass of clear-cut, fantastic brown clouds, stood the Chateau of Montpersan. On reaching the door of the chateau I found it wide open. This unforeseen circumstance somewhat baffled my plans and anticipations. Nevertheless I entered boldly, and was at once encountered by two dogs, barking as only country dogs can bark. At this noise a servant-woman rushed in, and when I told her I wished to speak to Madame la Comtesse, she pointed to the trees in the English park surrounding the chateau, and said: "Madame is out there."

"Thank you!" I said in an ironical tone. Her *out there* might have sent me wandering two hours in the park.

A pretty curly-headed little girl in a white frock, pink sash and a plaited pelerine, came up, having heard the question and answer. On seeing me she ran off crying out in a refined little accent: "Mamma, here's a gentleman who wishes to speak to you."

I followed along the winding paths the leaping, skipping white pelerine that like a will-o'-the-wisp showed me the way the little girl had taken.

I must make a full confession. When I reached the last shrub on the avenue I pulled up my collar, brushed my old hat and trousers with the cuffs of my coat, my coat with its sleeves, and my sleeves one with the other. Then I carefully buttoned it that the cloth of the lapel might be seen—this is always a little fresher than the rest; finally, I drew my trousers down over my boots, which I had artistically rubbed in the grass. Thanks to this *toilette de Gascon* I trusted I might not be taken for the itinerant of the sub-prefecture; but now, when in thought I look back to that hour of my youth, I have often a hearty laugh.

Suddenly as I was composing my deportment, at the turn of a green winding, in the midst of a thousand flowers lit by a warm ray of sunshine, I saw Juliet and her husband. The pretty little girl was holding her mother's hand. The countess had evidently hastened her step on hearing the ambiguous phrase of her child. Startled at the sight of a stranger who bowed somewhat awkwardly to her, she stopped, looked at me with an air of cold politeness; an adorable pouting of her lips was a revelation to me of her thwarted hopes. In vain I endeavored to recall some of the flowery phrases I had so laboriously prepared. During this moment of our common hesitation the husband might join us. A thousand thoughts rushed through my brain. To keep myself in countenance I muttered a few insig-

nificant words asking if the persons present were really Monsieur Le Comte and Madame la Comtesse de Montpersan. These commonplaces allowed me time to judge at a glance and analyze with a perspicacity rare at the age I then was, the couple whose solitude I was about so cruelly to disturb. The husband looked the type of gentleman that nowadays is held to be the brightest ornament of the provinces. He wore a huge pair of thick-soled shoes. I place these foremost, because they struck my eye even more than did his soiled coat, his threadbare trousers, his loosely tied cravat, his shrunk-up shirt collar. There was in him a tinge of the magistrate, more of the counselor of a prefecture, all the importance of a mayor of a department whom nothing can resist, and the sourness of an eligible candidate periodically rejected since 1816, an unimaginable compound of rustic good sense and imbecility; no manners, but all the arrogance of wealth; in subjection to his wife, but fancying himself master; ready to explode at trifles, but knowing nothing of serious matters; for the rest, a withered, wrinkled, tanned face, a few long, lank gray hairs—such was the man. But the countess! Ah! what a sudden, vivid contrast to her husband. She was a little woman of lithe and graceful dimensions, a figure so charming, dainty and delicate, you might fear to touch it, so fragile did it look. She was dressed in white muslin, a pretty bonnet trimmed with pink ribbons, a pink sash, a chemisette so deliciously filled up by her shoulders and the exquisite outlines of her form, that an almost irresistible longing arose in your heart to possess it all. Her eyes were bright, dark, expressive; her movements gentle, her foot charming. An old roue might have set her down as thirty, such a look of youthfulness was there in her forehead, and in all the dainty details of her head. In character there was a blending of both the Comtesse de Lignolles and of the Marquise de B—— in her: two types of women always fresh in the memory of any young fellow who has read Louvet's romance. I fathomed at once the secrets of this pair, and formed a diplomatic decision worthy of a veteran embassador. It was perhaps the only occasion in my life in which I exhibited tact, and which enabled me to understand in what the address of courtiers and men of the world consists.

Since these days of *insouciance* I have had too many battles to fight to think of distilling all the little acts of life, and do nothing but perform the small modulations of etiquette and *bon ton* which dry up the generous emotions.

"Monsieur le Comte, permit me to say a few words to you in private," I said with a mysterious air, taking a few steps backward.

He followed me. Juliet left us to ourselves, and went on her way carelessly, like a woman sure to find out her husband's secrets as soon as she cares to learn them. As briefly as I could I informed the count of the death of my traveling companion. The effect this news produced upon him showed me he had a real affection for his young coadjutor, and the discovery gave me courage to answer him as I did in the dialogue that ensued.

"My wife will be in despair," he exclaimed. "I shall have to use precautions in breaking this painful news to her."

"Monsieur, in addressing myself first to you," I said, "I fulfill a duty. I did not wish to acquit myself of this mission given me by an unknown person to Madame la Comtesse without first speaking to you; but he confided to me a sort of honorable *fideicommis,* a secret which I have no power to dispose of. After the high opinion of your character that he impressed me with, I thought you would not object to my fulfilling his last wishes. Madame la Comtesse will be at liberty to break the silence imposed on me."

Hearing this eulogy, the gentleman pleasantly nodded his head. He answered by a very involved compliment, and concluded by allowing me free scope. We retraced our steps. At this moment the dinner-bell rang. I was invited to remain.

Seeing us both looking grave and silent, Juliet furtively scrutinized us. Amazed at seeing her husband devising some frivolous pretext for allowing us a *tete-a-tete* she stopped, casting at me one of those quick, penetrating looks that women only can give. There was in her glance all the curiosity permissible in a mistress of a house receiving a stranger standing there as though he had dropped from the clouds; all the catechisings challenged by my dress, my youth, my physiognomy; strange contrasts! all the disdain of an adored mistress in whose eyes all men save one are as nothing. There were instinctive fears, alarms, the vexation of seeing an unknown guest when she had made arrangements to insure the bliss of solitude for her love. I interpreted this mute eloquence, and answered it by a sad smile of pity and sympathy. Then for a moment I contemplated her in all the glory of her beauty, as she stood there in the full serenity of the day on the narrow path bordered with flowers. Gazing at this admirable picture, I was unable to restrain a sigh.

"Alas! Madame, I have made a very painful journey, undertaken—for you alone."

"Monsieur!" she said.

"Oh," I replied, "I come in his name who calls you Juliet." She turned pale. "You won't see him to-day."

"He is ill?" she asked, in a low voice.

"Yes," I replied. "But I entreat you to be calm. I am commissioned by him to confide to you certain secrets that concern you; and believe me, never was messenger more discreet or more devoted."

"What is it?"

"If he no longer loved you?"

"Oh, that is impossible!" she exclaimed, letting a smile escape that was anything but frank.

Suddenly she was seized with a kind of shudder. She darted at me a wild, quick look, turned red, and said:

"He is alive?"

My God! What a dreadful word! I was too young to bear the accent this was said in; I could make no answer, but gazed with a stupefied expression at the unhappy woman.

"Monsieur, monsieur! an answer!" she cried.

"Yes, madame."

"Is it true? Oh, tell me the truth! I can bear it. Tell me. Any pain must be less poignant than this suspense."

My reply was two tears, forced from me by the strange accents in which these words were spoken.

She leaned against a tree, uttering a faint cry.

"Madame," I said, "here is your husband!"

"Have I a husband?"

At these words she fled, and was out of sight.

"Well, the dinner is getting cold," said the count. "Come, monsieur."

Thereupon I followed the master of the house, who led me into a dining-room, where I found a repast prepared with all the luxury that Parisian tables have accustomed us to. There were five covers: those for the husband and wife, and that of the little girl. *Mine*, that should have been *his*. The fifth was for a canon of Saint Denis, who, when grace was said, asked:

"Where is our dear countess?"

"Oh! she is coming," replied the count, who, after hastily helping us to soup, helped himself to a very ample plateful, and dispatched it with marvelous rapidity.

"Oh! my nephew," exclaimed the canon, "if your wife were here you would be more reasonable."

"Papa will make himself ill," said the little girl with an arch look.

A moment after this gastronomic episode, and just as the count was eagerly carving a piece of venison, the lady's-maid came in and said: "Monsieur, we cannot find madame."

At these words, I sprung up, dreading some catastrophe, and my countenance so vividly expressed my fears, that the old canon followed me to the garden. The husband, for decency's sake, came as far as the threshold.

"Stay! stay! Don't be uneasy," he cried out to us.

But he came no further. The canon, the lady's-maid and I hurried along the paths and lawns of the park, calling, listening, the more anxiously as I told them of the young viscount's death. As we went I described the circumstances of the fatal event. I could see that the *femme-de-chambre* was much attached to her mistress. She divined the secret of my apprehensions more clearly than the canon did. We looked into all the fountains and basins, visited every spot, but found neither the countess nor any trace of her passage. At last, going along a wall, I heard low, stifled groans, that seemed to issue from a sort of barn. At all risks I entered. There we found Juliet, who in the instinct of despair had buried herself in the hay; her mouth hidden, impelled by an invincible feeling of shame to deaden the sound of her agonized cries,—they were the sobs and tears of a child, but more penetrating, more plaintive. There was nothing more in this world for her. The *femme-de-chambre* raised her mistress, who allowed her to move her about with the nerveless indifference of a dying animal. The girl could say nothing but: "Come, madame, come."

The old canon asked: "But what's the matter with her? What's the matter, my niece?"

At last, with the aid of the *femme-de-chambre*, I carried Juliet to her room, and recommended her to be carefully watched, and that every one should be told she had a headache. After which the canon and I descended to the dining-room. Some time had elapsed since we quitted the count—I had given him little thought, save at that moment on the peristyle when his indifference struck me—but my astonishment increased when I now found him philosophically sitting at table. He had eaten almost the whole dinner, to the great delight of

his daughter, who sat smilingly watching her father's flagrant disobedience of the countess's orders. His strange indifference became intelligible to me through the slight altercation that followed between him and the canon. The count was subjected to a strict regimen imposed by the doctors in treating him for a serious disease, the name of which I forget, and now, incited by the fierce gluttony often incidental to convalescence, the appetite of the brute had prevailed over the sensibilities of the man. In one moment I had seen Nature in all her variety, under two very opposite aspects, bringing the comic side of life into the very heart of the most horrible pain. The evening passed sadly. I was tired. The canon exercised his wits endeavoring to guess the cause of his niece's tears. The husband sat silently digesting, satisfied with a rather vague explanation of her indisposition which the countess sent him through her *femme-de-chambre.* We retired early. Passing the door of the countess's bedroom as I followed the valet, who was conducting me to mine, I timidly inquired how she was getting on. Recognizing my voice, she bid me enter, and tried to speak to me; but unable to articulate a word, she bowed her head, and I withdrew. Spite of the cruel emotions that I had taken part in with all the simple faith and sincerity of youth, I fell asleep, overcome by the fatigue of my forced march. Late in the night I was awoke by the shrill noise made by the rings of my curtains as they were violently pulled back on their iron rods. There sat the countess at the foot of my bed, with the light of a lamp that had been placed on my table falling full on her face!

"Is it all true, monsieur?" she said: "I don't see how I am to live after the shock I have received; but at this moment I am calm. I must hear all."

"What—calm!" said I to myself as I looked at the frightful pallor of her complexion contrasting with the brown of her hair, as I listened to the guttural sound of her voice, as I gazed stupefied at the sudden ravages her altered features bore witness to. She sat there shriveled and colorless as a leaf robbed of the last tint of autumn. Her red swollen eyes, their beauty gone, reflected only bitter, profound grief. You would have said a gray cloud was reflected in what a little while ago the sun was sparkling.

I narrated simply, without laying much stress on certain too painful particulars, the fatal event that had deprived her of her friend. I described our first day's journey, filled with the reminiscences of love. She shed no tears, listened intently, her head bent toward me, like that of an anxious physician scanning pain. Seizing a moment when she appeared to have thrown open her whole heart to suffering, to the wish to plunge into her misery with all the ardor the first fever of despair causes, I told her the fears that had agitated the dying man, told her why and how he had charged me with this fatal message. Her eyes dried under the somber fire that flashed out from the deepest regions of the soul. She grew paler. When I handed her the letters which I had placed under my pillow, she took them mechanically: then trembling violently, said in a hollow voice: "And I

burned his! I have nothing belonging to him! nothing! nothing!"

She struck her forehead.

"Madame," I said. She looked at me with a convulsive movement. "I cut from his head a lock of hair, which I have brought you."

And I handed her this last, this incorruptible relic of him she loved. Ah! if you had received the burning tears that fell on my hands, you would know what gratitude is when it follows so close upon the benefit. She pressed my hands, and with a stifled voice, and look of burning fever, a look in which a momentary happiness gleamed through horrible suffering—

"Ah! you love!" she said. "May you be always happy; never lose her who is dear to you!"

She said no more, and vanished with her treasure.

The next morning this scene of the night, mixed up with my dreams, seemed to me a fiction. To convince myself of its painful truth I looked fruitlessly for the letters under my pillow. It is useless to recount the events of the next day. I remained still some hours with the Juliet so extolled by my poor fellow-traveler. The most trifling words, gestures, actions of this woman, bore the stamp of that nobility of soul, that delicacy of feeling, that made her one of those blessed creatures of love and devotion so rare on this earth. In the evening the Count de Montpersan accompanied me to Moulins. When we arrived he said with some embarrassment: "Monsieur, if it is not abusing your kindness and acting indiscreetly toward a stranger to whom we are already much indebted, would you be so good, since you are going to Paris, to leave at Monsieur de——" (I forget the name), "Rue du Sentier, a sum of money that I owe him and which he has begged me to forward as soon as possible?"

"Most willingly," I replied.

And in the innocence of my soul I took a roll of twenty-five louis which helped me to return to Paris, and which I faithfully delivered to the correspondent, soi-disant creditor of Monsieur de Montpersan.

It was only at Paris, when I was taking the money to the house indicated, that I saw through the ingenious device by which Juliet had managed to oblige me. The way in which the money was lent me, the delicacy observed toward a poverty easy to be divined—do these not reveal the genius of a loving woman?

What an exquisite pleasure to have been able to relate this adventure to a woman who, in her terror, has pressed you to her heart and said: "Oh! dear one, you must not die!"

Giulietta

At the period when Bartolommeo della Scala, a gentle and accomplished prince, presided over the destinies of our native place, a fine and beautiful tract of country, I frequently remember hearing my father say that there flourished two noble but rival families, whose exasperation against each other was carried to the utmost extreme. The name of one of these was the Cappelletti, that

of the other the Montecchi; and it is believed that the descendants of the latter faction are now residing in Udino in the persons of Messer Niccolo and Messer Giovanni, who settled there by some strange chance under the title of Monticoli of Verona. They would appear, however, to have retained little of their ancient splendor and reputation beyond their courteous manners and demeanor. And although, on perusing several ancient chronicles, I have met with the names of the families, who are mentioned as united in the same cause, I shall merely touch upon their history as it was told to me in the following words, without deviating from the original authority.

Both families, we are told, were equally powerful and wealthy, abounding in friends and relatives, and highly favored in Verona, under the abovementioned prince. Whether of a private or a public nature, the fued which arose between them was of a very ferocious and fatal character, various partisans on both sides falling victims to its rage. Nor was it until weary of mutual wrongs, and awed by the repeated commands and entreaties of their prince, that they were induced to enter into such terms as to meet or to address each other peaceably without apprehension of further violence and bloodshed. But daily becoming more reconciled, it happened that a festival was to be given by Messer Antonio, the head of the house of the Cappelletti, a man of gay and joyous character, who made the most magnificent preparations to receive all the chief families in the city.

At one of these assemblies there one evening appeared a youth of the Montecchi family, who followed thither some lady whom he was desirous, as lovers often are, of accompanying in person (no less than in mind) upon such occasions of general festivity. He had a noble and commanding person, with elegant and accomplished manners; and he had no sooner withdrawn his mask, screening himself in the character of a wood-nymph, than every eye was turned with admiration on his beauty, which appeared to surpass even that of the most beautiful ladies present.

He especially attracted the attention of an only daughter of Messer Antonio, whose charms both of mind and person were unrivaled throughout the whole city. Such was the impression she received at his appearance, that from the moment their eyes first met she found that she was no longer mistress of her own feelings. She saw him retire into a distant part of the assembly, seldom coming forward either in the dance or in converse with others, bearing himself like one who kept a jealous watch over some beloved object whom he would fain have held aloof from the joyous scene. Such a thought struck a chill to her heart, as she had heard he was a youth of warm and animated manners.

About the approach of midnight, toward the conclusion of the ball, was struck up the dance of the torch, or of the hat, whichever we choose to call it, usually proposed with us before the breaking up of the feast. While the company stand round in a circle, each dancer takes his lady, and the lady him, changing partners as they please. As it went round, the noble youth was led out by a lady who chanced to place him near the enamored daughter of Cappelletti. On the other side of her stood a youth named Marcuccio Guercio, whose

hand, ever cold to the touch, happened to come in contact with the fair lady's palm; and soon after Romeo Montecchi, being on her left hand, took it in his, as was customary. On which the lady, anxious to hear his voice, said:

"Welcome to my side, Messer Romeo."

He, observing her eyes were fixed upon his awaiting his reply, and delighted at the tone of her voice, returned:

"How! am I indeed then welcome?"

"Yes, and I ought to thank you," she returned, smiling, "since my left hand is warmed by your touch, whilst that of Marcuccio freezes my right."

Assuming a little more confidence, Romeo again replied:

"If your hand, lady, feels the warmth of mine, my heart no less has kindled warm at your eyes."

A short, bright smile was the only answer to this, except that in a lower tone, as fearful of being seen or heard, she half whispered back:

"I vow, O Romeo, there is no lady here whom I think nearly so handsome as you seem to me."

Fascinated by her sweet address, Romeo, with still greater warmth, replied:

"Whatever I may be, I only wish you, sweet lady, to hold me ever at your service."

When the festival broke up, and Romeo had retired to his chamber, dwelling on the harsh usage of his former love, from whose eyes he had drunk softness mixed with too much scorn, he resolved to give his soul wholly, even to the fair foe of his father's house. She, on the other hand, had thought of little else since she left him than of the supreme felicity she should enjoy in obtaining so noble a youth for her lord. Yet when she reverted to the deadly enmity which had so long reigned between the two houses, her fears overpowered the gentler feelings of her soul, and unable wholly to subdue them, she inveighed against her own folly in the following words:

"Wretch that I am! what enchantment thus drags me to my ruin? Without hope or guide, O how shall I escape? for Romeo loves me not. Alas! he perhaps feels nothing but hatred against our house, and would perhaps only seek my shame. And were it possible he should think of taking me for his wedded wife, my father would never consent to bestow my hand."

Then revolving other feelings in her mind, she flattered herself that their attachment might become the means of further reconciliation between the houses, even now wearied with their mutual feuds; and, "Oh!" she exclaimed, "what a blissful means of changing foes into relatives!" Fixed in this resolve, she again met Romeo with eyes of softness and regard. Mutually animated with equal ardor and admiration, the loved image was fixed so deeply in their imagination, that they could no longer refrain from seeing each other; and sometimes at the windows and sometimes in the church, they sought with avidity every occasion to express their mutual passion through their eyes, and neither of them seemed to enjoy rest out of the presence of the beloved object.

But chiefly Romeo, fired at the sight of her exquisite charms and manners, braved all risks for the pleasure of having her near him; and he would fre-

quently pass the greatest part of the night around her house, beneath her windows, or, scaling the walls, force his way to the balcony that commanded a view of her chamber, without the knowledge either of herself or others; and there he would sit for hours, gazing and listening his soul away, enamored of her looks and voice. He would afterwards throw himself listlessly to sleep, careless of returning home, in the woods or in the roads. But one evening, as love would have it, the moon shining out more brightly than usual, the adventurous Romeo was discovered by his lady, as she opened the casement, on the balcony. Imagining that it might be someone else, he retreated, when, catching a glimpse of his figure, she gently called to him:

"Wherefore, O Romeo, come you hither?"

"It is the will of love: therefore do I come," he replied.

"And if you should be found here, Romeo, know you it will be sudden death?"

"Too well I do, dear lady; and I doubt not it will happen so some night, if you refuse me your aid. But as I must at some time die, wherever I may be, I would rather yield my breath here as near you as I dare, with whom I would ever choose to live, did Heaven and you consent." To which words the lady replied:

"Believe me, Romeo, it is not I who would forbid thee to remain honorably at my side; it is thou and the enmity thou and thine bear us, that stand between us twain."

"Yet can I truly aver," replied the youth, "that the dearest hope I have long endulged has been to make you mine; and if you had equal wishes, on you alone it would rest to make me for ever yours: no hand of man, believe me, love, should sunder us again."

On saying this, they agreed on further means to meet again, and converse much longer some future evening; and they retired, full of each other, to rest. The noble youth having frequently in this way held appointments with her, one winter's evening, while the snow fell thick and fast about him, he called to her from the usual spot:

"Ah, Juliet, Juliet! how long will you see me thus languishing in vain? Do you feel nothing for me, who through these cold nights, exposed to the stormy weather, wait on the cold ground to behold you?"

"Alas! alas! I do indeed pity you," returned a sweet voice, "but what would you that I should do? often have I besought you to go away."

"No, no," returned Romeo, "not away: and therefore, gentle lady, deign to give me refuge in your chamber from these bitter winds."

Turning towards him with a somewhat scornful voice, the lady reproached him:

"Romeo, I love you as much as it is possible for woman to love; therefore it is that you ask me this; your worth has led me further than I ought to go. But, cruel as you are, if you dream that you can enjoy my love by long prevailing suit in the manner you imagine, lay such thoughts aside, for you deceive yourself, Montecchi. And as I will no longer see you nightly periling your life for me, I frankly tell you, Romeo, that if you please to take me as I am, I will joyfully become your wife, giving myself up wholly to your will, ready to

follow you over the world wherever you may think best."

"And this," replied the gentle youth, "is all I have so long wished; now then let it be done!"

"So let it be, even as you will," cried Juliet; "only permit the Friar Lorenzo da San Francesco, my confessor, first to knit our hands, if you wish me wholly and happily to become yours."

"Am I to suppose, then, that Friar Lorenzo, my love, is acquainted with the secret of your breast?"

"Yes, Romeo," returned Juliet, "and he will be ready to grant us what we request of him;" and here, having fixed upon the proper measures, they again took leave of each other.

The friar, who belonged to the minor order of Osservanza, was a very learned man, well skilled no less in natural than in magical arts, and was extremely intimate with Romeo, in whom he had found it necessary to confide on an occasion in which he might otherwise have forfeited his reputation, which he was very desirous of maintaining with the vulgar. He had fixed upon Romeo in his emergency as the most brave and prudent gentleman he knew to trust with the affair he had in hand. To him only he unbosomed his whole soul; and Romeo, having now recourse to him in his turn, acquainted him with his resolution of making the lovely daughter of Messer Antonio as quickly as possible his wedded wife, and that they had together fixed upon him as the secret instrument and witness of their nuptials, and afterwards as the medium of their reconciliation with her father.

The friar immediately signified his consent, no less because he ventured not to oppose or disoblige the lover, than because he believed it might be attended with happy results; in which case he would be likely to derive great honor from the heads of both houses, as the means of their reconciliation. In the meanwhile, it being the season of Lent, the fair Juliet, under semblance of going to confession, sought the residence of Friar Francesco, and having entered into one of the confessionals made use of by the monks, she inquired for Lorenzo, who, hearing her voice, led her along after Romeo into the convent. Then closing the doors of the confessional, he removed an iron grate which had hitherto separated her from her lover, saying:

"I have been always glad to see you, my daughter; but you will now be far dearer to me than ever if you wish to receive Messer Romeo here as your husband."

To which Juliet answered that there was nothing she so much wished as that she might lawfully become his wife, and that she had therefore hastened thither, in order that before Heaven and him she might take those vows which love and honor required, and which the friar must witness, as her trust in him was great.

Then in the presence of the priest, who performed the ceremony under the seal of confession, Romeo espoused the fair young Juliet; and having concluded how they were to meet each other again at night, exchanging a single kiss, they took leave of the friar, who remained in the confessional awaiting the arrival of penitents. Having thus secretly obtained the object of their wishes, the youthful Romeo and his bride for many days enjoyed the most unalloyed felicity, hoping at the same time for a favor-

able occasion to become reconciled to her father, in acquainting him with their marriage. But Fortune, as if envious of their supreme happiness, just at this time revived the old deadly feud between the houses in such a way, that in a few days, neither of them wishing to yield to the other, the Montecchi and the Cappelletti meeting together, from words proceeded to blows. Desirous to avoid giving any mortal hurts to his sweet wife's relatives, Romeo had the sorrow of beholding his own party either wounded or driven from the streets, and incensed with passion against Tebaldo Cappelletti, the most formidable of his adversaries, he struck him dead at his feet with a single blow, and put his companions to flight, terrified at the loss of their chief.

The homicide had been witnessed by too many to remain long a secret, and the complaint being brought before the prince, the Cappelletti threw the blame exclusively on Romeo, who was sentenced by the council to perpetual banishment from Verona. It is easier for those who truly love to imagine than it is here to describe, the sensations of the young bride on receiving these tidings. She wept long and bitterly, refusing to hear any consolation; and her grief was deepened by the reflection that she could share it with no one. Romeo, on the other hand, regretted leaving his country on her account alone, and resolving to take a sorrowful farewell of the object of all his soul's wishes, he had again recourse to the assistance of the friar, who dispatched a faithful follower of Romeo's father to apprise his wife of the time and place of meeting, and thither she eagerly repaired. Retiring together into the confessional, they there wept bitterly over their misfortune. The young bride at length, checking her tears, exclaimed in an accent of despair:

"I cannot bear to live! What will my life be without you? Oh, let me fly with you; wherever you go I will follow, a faithful and loving servant. I will cast these long tresses away, and by none shall you be served so well, so truly, as by me."

"No, never let it be said," replied Romeo, "that you accompanied me in other guise than in that of a cherished and honored bride. Yet were it not that I feel assured that our affairs will soon improve, and that the strife between our two families will very shortly cease, indeed I could not bear, my love, to leave you. We shall not long be divided, and my thoughts, sweet Juliet, will be ever with you. And should we not be quickly restored to each other, it will then be time to fix how we are to meet again."

So, after having wept and embraced each other again and again, they tore themselves asunder, his wife entreating that he would remain as near her as possible, and by no means go so far as Rome or Florence.

After concealing himself for some time in the monastery of Friar Lorenzo, Romeo set out more dead than alive for Mantua, but not before he had agreed with the servant of the lady that he was to be informed, through the friar, of every particular that might occur during his absence; and he further instructed the servant, as he valued his protection and rewards, to obey his wife in the minutest things which she might require of him. After her husband had departed, she gave herself up a prey to the deepest grief, a grief so incessant

as to leave its traces on her beauty, and attract the attention of her mother. She tenderly loved her daughter, and affectionately inquiring into the cause of her affliction, she merely received vague excuses in reply.

"But you are always in tears, my daughter," she continued; "what is it that can affect you thus? Tell me, for you are dear to me as my own life, and if it depend upon me, you shall no longer weep."

Then imagining that her daughter might probably wish to bestow her hand in marriage, yet be afraid of avowing her wishes, she determined to speak to her husband on the subject; and thus, in the hope of promoting her health and happiness, she pursued the very means that led to her destruction. She informed Messer Antonio that she had observed, for many days past, that something was preying on their daughter's mind, that she was no longer like the same creature, and that although she had used every means to obtain her confidence as to the source of her affliction, it had been all in vain. She then urged her suspicions that Juliet perhaps wished to marry, but that, like a discreet girl as she certainly was, she was averse to declare her feelings.

"So I think, Messer Antonio, we had better without more delay make choice for our daughter of a noble husband. Juliet has already completed her eighteenth year, on St. Euphemia's Day; and when they have advanced much beyond this period, the beauty of women, so far from improving, is rather on the wane. Besides," continued her mother, "it is not well to keep girls too long at home, though our Juliet has always been an excellent child. I am aware you have already fixed upon her dower, and we have nothing to do but to select a proper object for her love."

Messer Antonio agreed with his lady, and highly commended the virtues and the prudence of his daughter. Not many days afterward they proposed and entered into a treaty of marriage between the Count of Lodrone and their daughter. When it was on the point of being concluded, the lady, hoping to surprise her daughter with the agreeable tidings, bade her now rejoice, for that in a very few days she would be happily settled in marriage with a noble youth, and that she must no longer grieve, for it would take place with her father's consent and that of all her friends.

On hearing these words, Juliet burst into a flood of tears, while her mother endeavored to console her with the hope of being happily settled in life within the course of eight days.

"You will then become the wife of Count Lodrone; nay, do not weep, for it is really true: will you not be happy, Juliet, then?"

"No, no, my dear mother. I shall never be happy."

"Then what can be the matter with you? What do you want? Only tell me; I will do anything you wish."

"Then I would wish to die, mother; nothing else is left me now."

Her mother then first became aware that she was the victim of some deep-seated passion, and saying little more, she left her. In the evening she related to her husband what had passed, at which he testified great displeasure, saying that it would be necessary to have the affair examined into before venturing to proceed further with the count. And fearful lest any blame

might attach to his family, he soon after sent for Juliet, with the intention of consulting her on the proposed marriage.

"It is my wish, my dear Juliet, to form an honorable connection for you in marriage. Will you be satisfied with it?"

After remaining silent for some moments, his daughter replied:

"No, dear father, I cannot be satisfied."

"Am I to suppose, then, that you wish to take the veil, daughter?"

"Indeed I know not what"——and with these words out gushed a flood of bitter tears.

"But this I know," returned her father, "you shall give your hand to Count Lodrone, and therefore trouble yourself no further."

"Never, never!" cried Juliet, still weeping bitterly.

On this Messer Antonio threatened her with his heaviest displeasure did she again venture to dispute his will, commanding her immediately to reveal the cause of her unhappiness. And when he could obtain no other reply than sobs and tears, he quitted the apartment in a violent passion, unable to penetrate into her motives, leaving her with her mother alone. The wretched bride had already acquainted the servant intrusted with their secret, whose name was Pietro, with everything which had passed between herself and her parents, taking him to witness that she would sooner die than become the wife of any lord but Romeo. And this the good Pietro had carefully conveyed through the friar to the ears of the banished man, who had written to her, encouraging her to persevere, and by no means to betray the secret of their love, as he was then taking measures, within less than ten days, to bear her from her father's house. Messer Antonio and his lady Giovanna being unable in the meanwhile, either by threats or kindness, to discover their daughter's objections to the marriage, or whether she was attached to another, determined to prosecute their design.

"Weep no more, girl," cried her mother, "for married you shall be, though you were to take one of the Montecchi by the hand, which I am sure you will never be compelled to do!"

Fresh sobs and tears at these words burst from the poor girl, which only served to hasten the preparations for their daughter's nuptials. Her despair was terrible when she heard the day named, and calling upon death to save her, she rushed out of her chamber, and repairing as fast as possible to the convent of the friar, in whom, next to Romeo, she trusted, and from whom she had received tidings of her husband, she revealed to him the cause of her anguish, often interrupted by her tears. She then conjured him, by the friendship and obligations which he owed to Romeo, to assist her in this her utter need.

"Alas! of what use can I be," replied the friar, "when your two houses are even now so violently opposed to each other?"

"But I know, father, that you are a learned and experienced man, and you can assist me in many ways if you please. If you should refuse me everything else, at least, however, grant me this. My nuptials are even now preparing in my father's palace; he is now

gone out of the city to give orders at the villa on the Mantuan road, whither they are about to carry me, that I may there be compelled to receive the count, without a chance of opposition, as he is to meet me on my arrival at the place. Give me, therefore, poison, to free me at once from the grief and shame of exposing the wife of Romeo to such a scene. Give me poison, or I will myself plunge a dagger into my bosom!"

The friar, on hearing these desperate intentions, and aware how deeply he was implicated with Romeo, who might become his worst enemy were he not in some way to obviate the danger, turning to Juliet, said:

"You know, my daughter, that I confess a great portion of the people here, and am respected by all, no testament, no reconciliation taking place without my mediation. I am therefore careful of giving rise to any suspicions which might affect me, and should especially wish to conceal my interference in an affair like the present. I would not incur such a scandal for all the treasure in the world. But, as I am attached both to yourself and Romeo, I will exert myself in your favor in such a way as I believe no one ever before did. You must first, however, take a vow that you will never betray to others the secret I now intrust you with."

"Speak, speak boldly, father," cried Juliet, "and give me the poison, for I will inform nobody."

"I will give you no poison," returned the friar; "young and beautiful as you are, it would be too deep a sin. But if you possess courage to execute what I shall propose, I trust I may be able to deliver you safely into the hands of Romeo. You are aware that the family vault of the Cappelletti lies beyond this church in the cemetery of our convent. Now I will give you a certain powder, which, when you have taken it, will throw you into a deep slumber of eight and forty hours, and during that time you will be to all appearance dead, not even the most skillful physicians being able to detect a spark of life remaining. In this state you will be interred in the vault of the Cappelletti, and at a fitting season I will be in readiness to take you away, and bring you to my own cell, where you can stay until I go, which will not be long, to the chapter; after which, disguised in a monk's dress, I will bear you myself to your husband. But tell me, are you not afraid of being near the corpse of Tebaldo, your cousin, so recently interred in the same place?"

With serene and joyful looks the young bride returned:

"No, father; for if by such means I can ever reach my Romeo, I would face not this alone, but the terrors of hell itself."

"This is well; let it be done," cried the friar; "but first write with your own hand an exact account of the whole affair to Romeo, lest by any mischance, supposing you dead, he may be impelled by his despair to do some desperate deed; for I am sure he is passionately attached to you. There are always some of my brethren who have occasion to go to Mantua, where your husband resides: let me have your letter to him, and I will send it by a faithful messenger."

Having said this, the good monk, without the interference of whose holy order we find no matters of importance transacted, leaving the lady in the confessional, returned to his cell, but soon

came back bringing a small vase with the powder in it, saying:

"Drink this, mixed with simple water, about midnight, and fear not. In two hours after it will begin to take effect, and I doubt not but our design will be crowned with success. But haste, and forget not to write the letter, as I have directed you, to Romeo, for it is of great importance."

Securing the powder, the fair bride hastened joyfully home to her mother, saying:

"Truly, dear mother, Friar Lorenzo is one of the best confessors in the world. He has so kindly advised me that I am quite recovered from my late unhappiness."

Overjoyed on perceiving her daughter's cheerfulness, the Lady Giovanna replied:

"And you shall return his kindness, my dear girl, with interest; his poor brethren shall never be in want of alms."

Juliet's recovered spirits now banished every suspicion from the mind of her parents of her previous attachment to another, and they believed that some unhappy incident had given rise to the strange and melancholy disposition they had observed. They would now have been glad to withdraw their promise of bestowing her hand upon the count, but they had already proceeded so far that they could not, without much difficulty, retreat. Her lover was desirous that someone of his friends should see her; and her mother, Lady Giovanna, being somewhat delicate in her health, it was resolved that her daughter, accompanied by two of her aunts, should be carried to the villa at a short distance from the city—a step to which she made no opposition. She accordingly went; and imagining that her father would immediately on her arrival insist upon the marriage, she took care to secure the powder given to her by the friar.

At the approach of midnight, calling one of her favorite maids, brought up with her from her childhood, she requested her to bring her a glass of water, observing that she felt very thirsty; and as she drank it in the presence of the maid and one of her aunts, she exclaimed that her father should never bestow her hand upon the count against her own consent. These simple women, though they had observed her throw the powder into the water, which she said was to refresh her, suspected nothing further and went to rest. When the servant had retired with the light, her young mistress rose from her bed, dressed herself, and again lay down, composing her decent limbs as if she were never more to rise, with her hands crossed upon her breast, awaiting the dreaded result. In little more than two hours she lay to all appearances dead, and in this state she was discovered the next morning. The maid and her aunt, unable to awake her, feeling that she was already quite cold, and recollecting the powder, the strange expressions she had used, and, above all, seeing her dressed, began to scream aloud, supposing her to have poisoned herself. On this, the cries of her own maid, who loved her, were terrible.

"True, too true, dear lady: you said that your father should never marry you against your will. Alas! you asked me for the very water which was to occasion your death. Wretch that I am! And have you indeed left me, and left me thus? With my own hands I gave you the fatal cup, which, with

yours, will have caused the death of your father, your mother, and us all. Ah! why did you not take me with you, who have always so dearly loved you in life?"

And saying this she threw herself by the side of her young mistress, embracing her cold form. Messer Antonio, hearing a violent uproar, hastened, trembling, to ascertain the cause, and the first object he beheld was his daughter stretched out in her chamber, a corpse. Although he believed her gone beyond recovery, when he heard what she had drunk, he immediately sent to Verona for a very experienced physician, who having carefully observed and examined his daughter, declared that she had died of the effects of the poison more than six hours before.

The wretched father, on hearing his worst fears confirmed, was overwhelmed with grief; and the same tidings reaching the distracted mother, suddenly deprived her of all consciousness. When she was at length restored, she tore her hair, and calling upon her daughter's name, filled the air with her shrieks.

"She is gone! the only sweet solace of my aged days. Cruel, cruel! thou hast left me without even giving thy poor mother a last farewell! At least I might have drunk thy last words and sighs, and closed thine eyes in peace. Let my women come about me, let them assist me, that I may die! if they have any pity left, they will kill me; far better so to die than of a lingering death of grief. O God! in Thy infinite mercy take me away, for my life will be a burden to me now!"

Her women then came round her, and bore her to the couch, still weeping, and refusing all the consolation they could offer to her. The body of Juliet was in the meantime carried to Verona, and consigned with extraordinary ceremonies, amidst the lamentations of a numerous train of friends and relatives, to the vault in the cemetery of San Francesco, where the last rites to the dead were discharged.

The friar, having occasion to be absent from the city, had, according to his promise, confided Juliet's letter to Romeo to the hands of one of his brethren going to Mantua. On arriving, he called several times at the house without having the good fortune to meet with Romeo, and unwilling to trust such a letter to others, he retained it in his own hands, until Pietro, hearing of the death of Juliet, and not finding the friar in the city, resolved to bear the unhappy tidings to his master. He arrived in Mantua the following night and meeting with Romeo, who had not yet received the letter from the priest, he related to him, with tears in his eyes, the death of his young bride, whose burial he had himself witnessed. The hue of death stole over the features of Romeo as he proceeded with the sad story; and, drawing his sword, he was about to stab himself on the spot, had he not been prevented by force.

"It is well," he cried, "but I shall not long survive the lady of my soul, whom I valued more than life! O Juliet, Juliet! it is thy husband who doomed thee to death! I came not, as I promised, to bear thee from thy cruel father, whilst thou, to preserve thy sweet faith unbroken, hast died for me; and shall I, through fear of death, survive alone? No, this shall never be!" Then, throwing a dark cloak which he

wore over Pietro's shoulders, he cried, "Away, away! leave me!"

Romeo closed the doors after him, and preferring every other evil to that of life, only considered the best manner of getting rid of it. At last he assumed the dress of a peasant, and taking out a species of poison which he had always carried with him, to use in case of emergency, he placed it under the sleeve of his coat, and immediately set out on his return to Verona. Journeying on with wild and melancholy thoughts, he now defied his fate, hoping to fall by the hands of justice, or to lay himself down in the vault by the side of her he loved and die.

In this resolution, on the evening of the following day after her interment, he arrived at Verona without being discovered by anyone. The same night, as soon as the city became hushed, he resorted to the convent of the Frati Minori, where the tombs of the Cappelletti lay. The church was situated in the Cittadella, where the monks at that time resided, although, for some reason, they have since left it for the suburb of San Zeno, now called Santo Bernardino, and the Cittadella was formerly, indeed, inhabited by San Francesco himself. Near the outer walls of this place there were then placed a number of large monuments such as we see round many churches, and beneath one of these was the ancient sepulcher of all the Cappelletti, in which the beautiful bride then lay. Romeo approaching near not long after midnight, and possessing great strength, removed the heavy covering by force, and with some wooden stakes which he had brought with him, he propped it up to prevent it from closing again until he wished it; and he then entered the tomb and replaced the covering. The lamp he carried cast a lurid light around, while his eyes wandered in search of the loved object, which, bursting open the living tomb, he quickly found. He beheld the features of the beautiful Juliet now mingled with a heap of lifeless dust and bones; on which a sudden tide of sorrow sprung into his eyes, and amidst bitter sobs he thus spoke:

"O eyes, which while our loves to Heaven were dear, shone sweetly upon mine! O sweeter mouth, a thousand and a thousand times so fondly kissed by me alone, and rich in honeyed words! O bosom, in which my whole heart lay treasured up, alas! all closed and mute and cold I find ye now! My hapless wife, what hath love done for thee, but led thee hither? And why so soon two wretched lovers perish? I had not looked for this when hope and passion first whispered of other things. But I have lived to witness even this!" and he pressed his lips to her mouth and bosom, mingling his kisses with his tears.

"Walls of the dead!" he cried, "why fall ye not around me and crush me into dust? Yet, as death is in the power of all, it is a despicable thing to wish yet fear it too."

Then taking out the poison from under his vest, he thus continued:

"By what strange fatality am I brought to die in the sepulcher of my enemies, some of whom this hand hath slain? But as it is pleasant to die near those we love, now, my beloved, let me die!"

Then seizing the fatal vial, he poured its whole contents into his frame, and

catching the fair body of Juliet in his arms in a wild embrace:

"Still so sweet," he cried, "dear limbs, mine, only mine! And if yet thy pure spirit live, my Juliet, let it look from its seat of bliss to witness and forgive my cruel death; as I could not delighted live with thee, it is not forbidden me with thee to die;" and winding his arms about her, he awaited his final doom.

The hour was now arrived when, the vital powers of the slumbering lady reviving, and subduing the icy coldness of the poison, she would awake. Thus straitly folded in the last embraces of Romeo, she suddenly recovered her senses, and uttering a deep sigh, she cried:

"Alas! where am I? in whose arms, whose kisses? Oh, unbind me, wretch that I am! Base friar, is it thus you keep your word to Romeo, thus lead me to his arms?"

Great was her husband's surprise to feel Juliet alive in his embrace. Recalling the idea of Pygmalion:

"Do you know me, sweet wife?" he cried. "It is your love, your Romeo, hither come to die with you. I came alone and secretly from Mantua to find your place of rest."

Finding herself within the sepulcher and in the arms of Romeo, Juliet would not at first give credit to her senses; but, springing out of his arms, gazed a moment eagerly on his face, and the next fell on his neck with a torrent of tears and kisses.

"O Romeo, Romeo! what madness brings you hither? Were not my letters which I sent you by the friar enough to tell you of my feigned death, and that I should shortly be restored to you?"

The wretched youth, aware of the whole calamity, then gave loose to his despair.

"Beyond all other griefs that lovers ever bore, Romeo, thy lot has been! My life, my soul, I never had thy letters!"

And he told her the piteous tale which he had heard from the lips of her servant, and that, concluding she was dead, he had hastened to keep her company, and had already drunk the deadly draught. At these last words, his unhappy bride, uttering a wild scream, began to beat her breast and tear her hair, and then in a state of distraction she threw herself by the side of Romeo, already lying on the ground, and pouring over him a deluge of tears, imprinted her last kisses on his lips. All pale and trembling, she cried:

"Oh, my Romeo! will you die in my sight, and I too the occasion of your death? Must I live even a moment after you? Ah, would that I could give my life for yours! Would that I alone might die!"

In a faint and dying tone her husband replied:

"If my love and truth were ever dear to you, my Juliet, live, for my sake live; for it is sweet to know that you will then be often thinking of him who now dies for you, with his eyes still fixed on yours."

"Die! yes! you die for the death which in me was only feigned! What, therefore, should I do for this your real, cruel death? I only grieve that I have no means of accompanying you, and hate myself that I must linger on earth till I obtain them. But it shall not be

long before the wretch who caused your death shall follow you;" and uttering these words with pain, she swooned away upon his body. On again reviving, she felt she was catching the last breath, which now came thick and fast, from the breast of her husband.

Friar Lorenzo, in the meanwhile, aware of the supposed death and of the interment of Juliet, and knowing that the termination of her slumber was near, proceeded with a faithful companion about an hour before sunrise to the monument. On approaching the place, he heard her sobs and cries, and saw the light of a lamp through an aperture in the sepulcher. Surprised at this, he imagined that Juliet must have secreted the light in the monument, and awaking and finding no one there, had thus begun to weep and bewail herself. But on opening the sepulcher with the help of his companion, he beheld the weeping and distracted Juliet holding her dying husband in her arms, on which he immediately said:

"What! did you think, my daughter, I should leave you here to die?"

To which she only answered with another burst of sorrow:

"No! away! I only fear lest I should be made to live. Away, and close our sepulcher over our heads; here let me die. Or, in the name of pity, lend me a dagger, that I may strike it into my bosom and escape from my woes. Ah, cruel father! well hast thou fulfilled thy promise, well delivered to Romeo his letters, and wed me, and borne me safely to him! See, he is lying dead in my arms;" and she repeated the fatal tale.

Thunderstruck at these words, the friar gazed upon the dying Romeo, exclaiming with horror:

"My friend, my Romeo! alas! what chance hath torn thee from us? Thy Juliet calls thee, Romeo, look up and hope. Thou art lying in her beauteous bosom and wilt not speak."

On hearing her loved name, he raised his languid eyes, heavy with death, and fixing them on her for a short space, closed them again. The next moment, turning himself round upon his face in a last struggle, he expired.

Thus wretchedly fell the noble youth, long lamented over by his fair bride, till, on the approach of day, the friar tenderly inquired what she would wish to do.

"To be left to die where I am," was the reply.

"Do not, daughter, say this, but come with me; for though I scarcely know in what way to proceed, I can perhaps find means of obtaining a refuge for you in some monastery, where you may address your prayers to Heaven for your own and for your husband's sake."

"I desire you to do nothing for me," replied Juliet; "except this one thing, which I trust, for the sake of his memory," pointing to the body of Romeo, "you will do. Never breathe a syllable to anyone living of our unhappy death, that our bodies may rest here together forever in peace. And should our sad loves come to light, I pray you will beseech both our parents to permit our remains to continue mingled together in this sepulcher, as in love and in death we were still one."

Then turning again towards the body of Romeo, whose head she held sustained upon her lap, and whose eyes she had just closed, bathing his cold fea-

tures with her tears, she addressed him as if he had been in life:

"What shall I now do, my dear lord, since you have deserted me? What can I do but follow you? for nothing else is left me: death itself shall not keep me from you."

Having said this, and feeling the full weight of her irreparable loss in the death of her noble husband, resolute to die, she drew in her breath, and retaining it for some time, suddenly uttered a loud shriek and fell dead by her lover's side. The friar, perceiving that she was indeed dead, was seized with such a degree of terror and surprise, that, unable to come to any resolution, he sat down with his companion in the sepulcher bewailing the destiny of the lovers. At this time some of the officers of the police, being in search of a notorious robber, arrived at the spot, and perceiving a light and the sound of voices, they straightway ran to the place, and seizing upon the priests, inquired into their business. Friar Lorenzo, recognizing some of these men, was overpowered with shame and fear; but assuming a lofty voice, exclaimed:

"Back, sirs, I am not the man you take me for. What you are in want of you must search for elsewhere."

Their conductor then came forward, saying:

"We wish to be informed why the monument of the Cappelletti is thus violated by night, when a young lady of the family has been so recently interred here. And were I not acquainted with your excellent character, Friar Lorenzo, I should say you had come hither to despoil the dead."

The priests, having extinguished the lamp, then replied:

"We shall not render an account of our business to you; it is not your affair."

"That is true," replied the other; "but I must report it to the prince."

The friar, with a feeling of despair, then cried out, "Say what you please;" and closing up the entrance into the tomb, he went into the church with his companion.

The morning was somewhat advanced when the friars disengaged themselves from the officers, one of whom soon related to the Cappelletti the whole of this strange affair. They, knowing that Friar Lorenzo had been very intimate with Romeo, brought him before the prince, entreating, that if there were no other means, he might be compelled by torture to confess his reason for opening the sepulcher of the Cappelletti. The prince, having placed him under a strict guard, proceeded to interrogate him wherefore he had visited the tomb of the Cappelletti, as he was resolved to discover the truth.

"I will confess everything very freely," exclaimed the friar. "I was the confessor of the daughter of Messer Antonio, lately deceased in so very strange a manner. I loved her for her worth, and being compelled to be absent at the time of her interment, I went to offer up certain prayers over her remains, which when nine times repeated by my beads, have power to liberate her spirit from the pangs of purgatory. And because few appreciate or understand such matters, the wretches assert that I went there for the purpose of despoiling the body. But I trust I am better known. This poor gown and girdle are enough for me, and I would

not take a mite from all the treasures of the earth, much less the shrouds of the departed. They do me great wrong to suspect me of this crime."

The prince would have been satisfied with his explanation, had it not been for the interference of other monks, who, jealous of the friar, and hearing that he had been found in the monument, examined further, and found the dead body of Romeo, a fact which was immediately made known to the prince while still speaking to the friar. This appeared incredible to everyone present, and excited the utmost amazement throughout the city. The friar, then aware that it would be in vain further to conceal his knowledge of the affair, fell at the feet of his excellency, crying:

"Pardon, oh pardon, most noble prince! I have said what is not truth, yet neither for any evil purpose nor for love of gain have I said it, but to preserve my faith entire, which I promised to two deceased and unhappy lovers."

On this the friar was compelled to repeat the whole of the preceding tale. The prince, moved almost to tears as he listened, set out with a vast train of people to the monument of the family, and having ordered the bodies of the lovers to be placed in the Church of San Francesco, he summoned their fathers and friends to attend. There was now a fresh burst of sorrow springing from a double source. Although the parties had been the bitterest enemies, they embraced one another in tears, and the scene before them suddenly wrought that change in their hearts and feelings which neither the threats of their prince nor the prayers of their friends had been able to accomplish. Their hatred became extinguished in the mingled blood of their unhappy children. A noble monument was erected to their memory, on which was inscribed the occasion of their death, and their bodies were entombed together with great splendor and solemnity, and wept over no less by their friends and relatives than by the whole afflicted city. Such a fearful close had the loves of Romeo and Juliet, such as you have heard, and it was related to me by Pellegrino da Verona.

But whither art thou now fled, sweet piety and faith in woman? What living instance could we boast of that truth, proved unto death, shown by Juliet to her Romeo? Can it be that her praises shall not soon be sung by the most eloquent and gifted tongues? How many are there, who, in these times, instead of falling by the side of their departed lovers, would have turned their thoughts only to obtaining others? For if I now behold them capable, against every obligation of fidelity and true service, of rejecting those who once were dear to them, when they become oppressed by Fortune, what are we to believe their conduct would be after their death? Unfortunate are the lovers of this age, who can never flatter themselves, either by long, devoted service, or by yielding up their very lives, that their ladies will consent to die with them. They are rather, on the other hand, assured that they are no further objects of regard than inasmuch as they devote themselves altogether to the good-will and pleasure of their ladies.

Delicious Mouths

In London a day in mid-August drew to its close. The air was motionless, the pavements were hot. Weary children came home with the perambulator from the sand-pit of Regent's Park or the playground of Kensington Gardens. Young men from the city wore straw hats and thronged the outside of motor-omnibuses. Oxford Street, that singularly striving street, was still striving, still exhibiting some of its numerous activities. Starting from a humble and Holborn origin, it lives to touch the lips of Park Lane, but it goes to Bayswater when it dies. It was still protesting that it was not tired and still crowded with traffic. Irregular masses of buildings and heavy dusty trees stood out darkly against a sky of fainting lettuce color. Young Mrs. Bablove noticed them as she came out of the Tube station, drawing her cloak round her unwonted evening-dress. "Yes," said her husband, as she called his attention to the effect. "Striking." It was scarcely a minute's walk from the station to the Restaurant Merveilleux, where they were to be the guests of Mr. Albert Carver.

The Restaurant Merveilleux does its best. It has an arc-lamp and a medium-sized commissionaire. It bears its name proudly in gilt letters a foot and a half high. In the entrance are bay trees in green tubs and a framed bill of our celebrated *diner du jour* at half a crown. Within are little tables brightly appointed and many electric lights. A mahogany screen is carved with challenging pineapples and grapes, and against it is a table for six. Mr. Carver had reserved this table. Yet somehow one gets the correct impression that this is a small eating-house under Italian proprietorship.

The occasion of the litle dinner given by this bachelor and *viveur* was the engagement of Ada Bunting to Harold Simcox. Albert Carver had received much hospitality from Miss Bunting's parents. He had as nearly as possible got engaged to Miss Bunting himself, and now knew what the condemned man feels like who is unexpectedly reprieved. Miss Bunting and Mr. Simcox were the guests of importance. She was lymphatic and pale-haired; her future husband was smaller and a shade shorter than she. He concentrated on politeness, and made anyone to whom he spoke feel like a possible customer. As for Mr. and Mrs. Bablove, Mr. Albert Carver had always intended to ask them, if he ever asked anybody. He frankly admired Mrs. Bablove, and said so, and was slightly pleased when this created surprise and it was suggested that she was hardly his type. It seemed to imply that Mr. Carver was a problem, and this was subtly flattering to Mr. Carver—who, if a problem, was singularly soluble. It is true none the less that the women whom Albert Carver admired were mostly fleshy and exuberant. Mrs. Bablove looked like an angel who had gone into domestic service—a soul in servitude. She had to make a just-sufficient income suffice, and as she was devoted to her husband and her two little boys she did a good deal of work herself. She had a sweet and rather childish nature, was not with-

cut some true esthetic perception, and under less stringent limitations might have developed further. Mr. Bablove, a very quiet and prosaic man, who wore spectacles only when he was reading, made about the same income as Mr. Carver. They both held responsible positions in the same firm. They both lived in the same street in the Shepherd's Bush neighborhood. But Mr. Bablove's income had to provide for a household, and Mr. Albert Carver's income was all ear-marked for Mr. Albert Carver. There was less splendor in Mr. Bablove's house than in Mr. Carver's wicked flat with the hookah (from the cut-price tobacconist) standing on the low inlaid table and the French photogravure of a bathing subject over the mantelpiece.

The remaining guest was Miss Adela Holmes. She was beautiful and looked Oriental. Her movements (after office-hours) were slow and very graceful. Her voice was soft and languorous; her eyes also spoke. During the day she was the third quickest typist in London, and ran her own office strictly on business lines. Mr. Carver in his light way would sometimes call her "Nirvana"; he was convinced that this was an Eastern term of endearment, and, though an allusion to her appearance, permissible in a platonic friend who had known her for years.

Mr. Carver surveyed his little party with pleasure. It was not the celebrated half-crown dinner that was being served for this Lucullus; it was the rich man's alternative—the *diner de luxe* at four-and-six. Mr. Carver always said that if he did a thing at all he liked to do it well. He was a man of middle stature and middle age. His hair was very black and intensely smooth. His face suggested a commercial Napoleon. He was dressed with some elaboration; pink coral buttons constrained his white waistcoat over a slight protuberance. Other diners at other tables were not so dressed—not dressed for the evening at all. One blackguard had entered in a suit of flannels and a straw hat. But other tables had not the profusion of smilax and carnations which graced the table reserved for Mr. Carver's party. A paper simulation of chrysanthemums was good enough for the half-crowners. How could they expect the eager attendance given to Mr. Carver's party? The frock-coated proprietor hovered near the mahogany screen. The head-waiter, at a side-table, took the neck of a bottle of sparkling burgundy between his dusky hands and caused it to rotate vigorously in the ice-pail. This does not really make that curious wine any the worse. Another waiter handed up for Mr. Carver's approval the *chef's* attempt to make a lobster look like a sunset on the Matterhorn.

"Looks almost too good to eat," said Adela Holmes drowsily.

Mr. Carver laughed joyously. "Think so, Nirvana? Well, we'll try it."

The wonder had not yet quite gone out of the soft brown eyes of Dora Bablove. This was luxury indeed. It was a new way of living that she had never known; in the course of her married life she had dined out very rarely, and never after this manner. Somehow she felt as if she was not Dora Bablove at all.

The proprietor made a suggestion to Mr. Carver. "Good idea, signor," said Mr. Carver. "You'd like an electric fan, Mrs. Bablove, wouldn't you?"

It was done in a moment. An electric lamp was taken out, and something plugged in its place. A gentle whir, with a hint of an airplane in it. A cool breeze that fluttered the pendent smilax.

"I think you're being very well looked after," said Mrs. Bablove timidly.

"You've got it," said Mr. Carver with conviction. "That's just the advantage of a little place like this. I'm here pretty often, and the signor knows me; and—oh, well, I dare say he thinks it worth his while to keep my custom. I assure you I get an amount of personal attention here that I never get at the Ritz." As Mr. Carver had never been to the Ritz this is credible.

"I like being looked after," said Mrs. Bablove. "I like to think that so many people are taking so much trouble to please me."

"I should think—er—that must always happen," said the polite Mr. Simcox on her other side.

"Not a bit," laughed Dora. "As a rule, I take all the trouble. Ask Teddy if I don't."

But nobody asked Teddy. Mr. Bablove was discussing palmistry with Miss Bunting, who thought there might be something in it, and with Miss Holmes, who was quite expert and offered to read his hand.

Mr. Carver said, in his whimsical way, that he thought Mrs. Bablove should drink and forget it. He watched her as she touched with her full lips the magenta foam in her glass. He had never seen Mrs. Bablove in a low dress before; certainly she had a charm. The conversation grew animated. The question of London in August was settled. London empty? Not a bit of it. That was the old idea. Why, this year, with the House sitting, half the best people were still in London. You could walk through Mayfair and see for yourself.

Mrs. Bablove was not deeply interested in the question. She knew that Teddy and Mr. Carver would take their holidays just when the firm decided. She was more interested in the people in the room. The blackguard in the flannel suit had finished his lager and had attempted to light a pipe; it had been politely explained to him that pipes were not permissible. At a little table in the corner were a man with a saturnine face and a very young girl in red. They drank champagne, talked low and confidentially, and paid no attention to anybody. Dora Bablove had strayed into a world previously unexplored by her.

More and more the conviction came on her that the Dora who was unwrapping the vineleaf from the fat quail on her plate was not the Dora who had been married six years, who looked after her two little boys so well, who mended, and cleaned, and did rather clever things with the rest of the cold mutton. She was for the moment a woman untrammeled by circumstances. She delighted in it, enjoyed it desperately, and was half afraid of it. Had this Dora quite the same ideas about—well, about what was right?

The girl in red had lit a cigarette now, and she was getting rather angry with the man who was with her. Dora thought he was making her angry on purpose. She wondered why. She asked Mr. Carver.

Mr. Carver shook his head. A mistake to make the ladies angry—that was what he always thought. But some

of them had tempers. Now—well, he mustn't say that.

"Oh, go on, you must," said Dora.

"Well, I was only going to say that appearances are deceptive. You look at first sight as if you had the most placid nature in the world. But I think you could get angry, Mrs. Bablove—very angry."

"Oh, no. Quite wrong. Whatever makes you think that?"

"There's a look in the eyes sometimes. Oh, I assure you it makes me very careful," laughed Mr. Carver. "Frightens me. Now, really, Mrs. Bablove, you must have a little yellow Chartreuse with your coffee."

But Mrs. Bablove was resolute in her refusal. She did not care in the least about such things. She had drunk one glass of the sparkling burgundy, not to be out of the picture, and after that had sipped iced water. At the other end of the table "Nirvana" was saying that she didn't see why she shouldn't—two other women in the room had set the example. And with that she accepted a cigarette from Mr. Bablove's silver case. The smoke wandered gently through the smilax plantation, and left hurriedly when it met the electric fan.

And now Mr. Simcox had to take Miss Bunting home, for Miss Bunting lived in remote Wimbledon and in an early household, and the privilege of the latch-key was not accorded to her. Mr. Simcox, who had not refused the yellow Chartreuse or anything else, was slightly flushed and more polite than ever. He assured his host that it had been the pleasantest evening of his life and he should never forget it. Even the lymphatic Miss Bunting had become quite animated. At the beginning of the dinner they had maintained towards one another a pre-concerted air of dignified reserve, but that was now quite broken down.

Mr. Carver rose to see them to their cab. "And if anybody else tries to go," he said to the rest of his guests, "I shall lose my temper."

"Might have got a box at one of the halls if I'd thought about it," said Mr. Carver on his return. It was a well-meant effort of the imagination. He might, but it would have been unlike him.

"Much pleasanter where we are," said Miss Holmes languorously. "Performances always bore me."

"Oh, well, Nirvana," said Mr. Carver, "so long as you're pleased—"

Miss Holmes turned again to Mr. Bablove. His wife hoped that Teddy was not being too prosaic. From a word of two she caught she knew he was talking politics. But Miss Holmes did not look bored. Perhaps she was interested in politics too.

"Why do you call her Nirvana?" Mrs. Bablove asked, dropping her voice a little. But the couple at the further end of the table were absorbed in their talk now and taking no notice of what the others were saying.

"Why do I call her Nirvana? Because she looks like a gypsy. She does, doesn't she?"

Mr. Carver's voice had also become discreet.

"I don't know. I think she looks charming."

"Do you?" said Mr. Carver. "I'd like to talk to you about that. Not now—presently." He knew the value of a slight hint of mystery. "Have a cigarette now, Mrs. Bablove?"

"Thanks. I think I will."

"Why wouldn't you smoke before?" he asked as he lit the cigarette for her.

"Too many people. The room's nearly empty now. I'm not so brave as—Nirvana."

"I don't think you quite know what you are. You're full of possibilities."

"I like these cigarettes," said Dora. "Teddy gives me one sometimes, though I don't often smoke, but his are not quite so nice as these."

Mr. Carver became informative on the subject of Turkish tobacco, but with the information he wove much which was personal. It appeared that it was Mr. Carver's ambition to leave business and London and to spend the rest of his life in Japan.

"I thought you were devoted to London," said Mrs. Bablove. "What you say rather surprises me."

"I surprise myself sometimes," said Mr. Carver darkly.

A little later all rose to go.

A hansom was waiting just outside, and Mr. Carver began to organize briskly.

"Will you take Miss Holmes in that cab, Teddy? It's scarcely two minutes out of your way. I'll bring Mrs. Bablove in the next cab."

Mr. Carver took it all for granted, and it was done as he suggested. The next cab was a taxi.

"We shall be home before them," laughed Dora as she got into the cab. "By the way, Mr. Carver, what were you going to tell me about Nirvana?"

And presently Mr. Carver was saying why Miss Holmes could not seem charming when Dora Bablove was present. He compared them in some detail. "I don't think you know enough about yourself," he said. "That delicious mouth of yours!"

When they reached Mrs. Bablove's house Dora did not ask Mr. Carver to come in. She thanked him and said good night rather briefly. She switched on the light in the hall, ran upstairs to see that her two little boys were safely asleep, and came down to the dining room to wait for her husband.

She poured out a glass of water and drank it. Then she sat quite still in the easy-chair with her head in her hands. What was she to do? What on earth was she to do? A man had kissed her on the lips—a man who was not her husband. She had let him do it. She thought—she hardly knew—that her lips had answered to his. Such a thing had never happened to her before. She was wide awake now. But surely in the cab she must have been half asleep.

She had leaned back with her eyes half-closed, suffused with a pleasant warmth and tiredness, and had heard his caressing voice praising her as she had never before been praised. She had not guessed that he thought so much of her—that he admired her so much. Then as he spoke of the beauty of her hands he took one of her hands in his. She knew what would come and was without any power to prevent it. She had seen his face come near to her own—no, she would tell the truth to herself. For a moment she had gone mad and let herself go completely. She had wanted to be kissed, and as she felt his lips upon her own her kiss had met his.

True the next moment she had recovered herself; she chatted gaily, was merely amused when Mr. Carver would

have been sentimental, and would not let him get near her. Her one reference to what had happened was as the cab neared her own door. She said, "You know what you did when I had fallen asleep. Never try to do it again. And never speak of it to me. I couldn't forgive it twice, you know. Tonight I've—I made some allowance for—well, here we are. I must get out."

She was not troubled about Mr. Carver. She had told him that she was asleep, and had implied that he was under the influence of wine. She felt that she could always manage Mr. Carver.

But what about Teddy? He must never, never know. It was one little slip, one moment of madness, and it would never happen again. It would be wicked to let Teddy know and to make him wretched.

On the other hand, if she did not tell him, how was she to quiet the voice of conscience? What became of their mutual confidence? She felt that she could never be happy again until she had told all and been forgiven.

She took the thing tragically. She saw the whole of her own happiness and Teddy's happiness ruined by that one moment of madness and the future of the little boys seriously imperiled. She was just wondering who, in the event of a separation, would have the custody of the children, when she heard the sound of Teddy's hansom as it stopped at the door.

What on earth was she to do? She could never face him. She would just burst into tears and tell him everything.

But she found herself quite unable to carry out this decision. Teddy looked so cheerful. He talked more than usual. How had she liked it? A rare good dinner, it seemed to him. And she had been by far the prettiest woman there. He had felt proud of her.

She smiled sadly, and said that he was prejudiced. "And how did you get on with Miss Holmes?"

"Oh, all right. The trouble with her is that she's rather affected, and affectation is just one of those things that I can't stand."

If only for one moment he would take his eyes off her. She felt distraught. She hardly knew what she was saying. She observed that sparkling Burgundy seemed rather a heady wine. He hastened to agree with her.

"I didn't take much of it. To tell the truth, it's not a wine I ever met before, and the taste seemed to me rather funny. I'd sooner have a whisky-and-soda any day."

"Have one now. Do. Why not? I'll run up to bed because I'm so tired. I dare say I shall be asleep by the time you come."

"Oh, I shan't be long," said Teddy, and Dora managed to get out of the room without being kissed.

The moment she had gone Teddy's cheerfulness vanished. He mixed himself a very stiff whiskey-and-soda, and sipped gloomily, staring at the dead cigarette between his fingers.

Dora panted as she undressed. Tragedy seemed to be choking her. She hurried into bed. When Teddy came up she pretended to be asleep, but she got little sleep that night.

* * * * * * *

Two days had passed and Dora had not spoken. There were dark lines under her eyes, and she seldom smiled.

Teddy, always kind, had been kinder to her than ever. He said complimentary things to her. Every evening he brought her fruit from the city, because she liked fruit; it was expensive fruit too. And every kind word or act seemed to cut her heart like a knife. She felt so unworthy of devotion. The position was unendurable, and on the third morning as they rose from breakfast she suddenly determined to end it there and then—to tell him everything and throw herself on his mercy.

"I want to speak to you for a minute before you go to the city," she said. "Will you come into the drawing-room?"

"Very well," said Teddy.

In the drawing-room she found that she was shaking all over and had to sit down. She was thinking how she would begin, when she heard a hollow voice say, "Wait. You need say nothing." It was Teddy's voice.

"What do you mean?" she asked in a choked whisper.

"Do you think I haven't seen?" said Teddy, almost fiercely. "You guessed it somehow when I came into the house that night. I suppose a bad conscience gives itself away. I thought you knew when you asked me how I got on with Miss Holmes. These last two days you've been upset. You've not been yourself. And that of course made me certain you knew. Only let me tell you how I came to do it."

"Yes," said Dora, with great self-possession, "tell me that."

"Well, she was talking about the loneliness of her life. It was as much pity as anything. And the cab was going down a dark street at the time. Mind, I only kissed her once. And the moment I did it I—I was ashamed of myself. You don't know what I've been through."

Dora thought she did, but she said nothing.

"I swear that I care for no woman in the world but you, Dora. I'm awfully sorry I've hurt you like this. Can you ever forgive me?"

Dora rose, and placed both hands on his shoulders. "Could you have forgiven me," she said, "if I had let a man kiss me?"

He paused a moment. "Yes, Dora," he said, "I think so."

Her face was like the face of an angel. "Then, Teddy dear, I forgive you absolutely. We will never speak of this again. And it will never happen again, will it?"

"Never," said the repentant sinner, and kissed her.

Mrs. Bablove sang happily as she helped to make the beds that morning.

And they never did speak of it again. Once, two years later—this was after poor Aunt Mary had been called to her rest and the Babloves had become prosperous in consequence—Teddy gave it as his opinion that there was only one sparkling wine worth consideration and that wine was champagne. Dora cordially agreed with him, but changed the subject rapidly.

Dona Gorja's Choice

THROUGH the little square of St. Anna, towards a certain tavern, where the best wine is to be quaffed in Seville, there walked in measured steps two men whose demeanor clearly manifested the soil which gave them birth. He who walked in the middle of the street, taller than the other by about a finger's length, sported with affected carelessness the wide, slouched hat of Ecija, with tassels of glass beads and a ribbon as black as his sins. He wore his cloak gathered under his left arm; the right, emerging from a turquoise lining, exposed the merino lambskin with silver clasps. The herdsman's boots—white, with Turkish buttons,—the breeches gleaming red from below the cloak and covering the knee, and, above all, his strong and robust appearance, dark curly hair, and eye like a red-hot coal, proclaimed at a distance that all this combination belonged to one of those men who put an end to horses between their knees and tire out the bull with their lance.

He walked on, arguing with his companion, who was rather spare than prodigal in his person, but marvelously lithe and supple. The latter was shod with low shoes, garters united the stockings to the light-blue breeches, the waistcoat was cane-colored, his sash light green, and jaunty shoulder-knots, lappets, and rows of buttons ornamented the carmelite jacket. The open cloak, the hat drawn over his ear, his short, clean steps, and the manifestations in all his limbs and movements of agility and elasticity beyond trial plainly showed that in the arena, carmine cloth in hand, he would mock at the most frenzied of Jarama bulls, or the best horned beasts from Utrera.

I—who adore and die for such people, though the compliment be not returned—went slowly in the wake of their worships, and, unable to restrain myself, entered with them the same tavern, or rather eating-house, since there they serve certain provocatives as well as wine, and I, as my readers perceive, love to call things by their right name. I entered and sat down at once, and in such a manner as not to interrupt my Oliver and Roland, and that they might not notice me, when I saw that, as if believing themselves alone, they threw their arms with an amicable gesture round each others' neck, and thus began their discourse:

"Pulpete," said the taller, "now that we are going to meet each other, knife in hand—you here, I there,—*one, two,—on your guard,—triz traz,—have that,—take this and call it what you like*—let us first drain a tankard to the music and measure of some songs."

"Señor Balbeja," replied Pulpete, drawing his face aside and spitting with the greatest neatness and pulchritude towards his shoe, "I am not the kind of man either for La Gorja or other similar earthly matters, or because a steel tongue is sheathed in my body, or my weasand slit, or for any other such trifle, to be provoked or vexed with such a friend as Balbeja. Let the wine be brought, and then we will sing; and afterwards blood—blood to the hilt."

The order was given, they clinked

glasses, and, looking one at the other, sang a Sevillian song.

This done, they threw off their cloaks with an easy grace and unsheathed their knives with which to prick one another, the one Flemish with a white haft, the other from Guadix, with a guard to the hilt, both blades dazzling in their brightness, and sharpened and ground enough for operating upon cataracts, much less ripping up bellies and bowels. The two had already cleft the air several times with the said lancets, their cloak wound round their left arm—first drawing closer, then back, now more boldly and in bounds—when Pulpete hoisted the flag for parley, and said:

"Balbeja, my friend, I only beg you to do me the favor not to fan my face with *Juilon* your knife, since a slash might use it so ill that my mother who bore me would not know me, and I should not like to be considered ugly; neither is it right to mar and destroy what God made in His likeness."

"Agreed," replied Balbeja; "I will aim lower."

"Except—except my stomach also, for I was ever a friend to cleanliness, and I should not like to see myself fouled in a bad way, if your knife and arm played havoc with my liver and intestines."

"I will strike higher; but let us go on."

"Take care of my chest, it was always weak."

"Then just tell me, friend, *where* am I to sound or tap you?"

"My dear Balbeja, there's always plenty of time and space to hack at a man: I have here on my left arm a wen, of which you can make meat as much as you like."

"Here goes for it," said Balbeja, and he hurled himself like an arrow; the other warded off the thrust with his cloak, and both, like skilful penmen, began again tracing S's and signatures in the air with dashes and flourishes, without, however, raising a particle of skin.

I do not know what would have been the end of this onslaught, since my venerable, dry, and shriveled person was not suitable for forming a point of exclamation between two combatants; and the tavern-keeper troubled so little about what was happening that he drowned the stamping of their feet and clatter of the tumbling stools and utensils by scraping street music on a guitar as loud as he could. Otherwise he was as calm as if he were entertaining two angels instead of two devils incarnate.

I do not know, I repeat, how this scene would have ended, when there crossed the threshold a personage who came to take a part in the development of the drama. There entered, I say, a woman of twenty to twenty-two years of age, diminutive in body, superlative in audacity and grace. Neat and clean hose and shoes, short, black flounced petticoat, a linked girdle, head-dress or mantilla of fringed taffeta caught together at the nape of her neck, and a corner of it over her shoulder, she passed before my eyes with swaying hips, arms akimbo, and moving her head to and fro as she looked about her on all sides.

Upon seeing her the tavern-keeper dropped his instrument, and I was overtaken by perturbation such as I had not experienced for thirty years (I am, after all, only flesh and blood); but,

without halting for such lay-figures, she advanced to the field of battle.

There was a lively to-do here: Don Pulpete and Don Balbeja when they saw Doña Gorja appear, first cause of the disturbance and future prize for the victor, increased their feints, flourishes, curvets, onsets, crouching, and bounds—all, however, without touching a hair. Our Helen witnessed in silence for a long time this scene in history with that feminine pleasure which the daughters of Eve enjoy at such critical moments. But gradually her pretty brow clouded over, until, drawing from her delicate ear, not a flower or earring, but the stump of a cigar, she hurled it amidst the jousters. Not even Charles V's cane in the last duel in Spain produced such favorable effects. Both came forward immediately with formal respect, and each, by reason of the discomposure of his person and clothes, presumed to urge a title by which to recommend himself to the fair with the flounces. She, as though pensive, was going over the passage of arms in her mind, and then, with firm and confident resolution, spoke thus:

"And is this affair for me?"

"Who else should it be for? since I—since nobody—" they replied in the same breath.

"Listen, gentlemen," said she. "For females such as I and my parts, of my charms and descent—daughter of La Gatusa, niece of La Méndez, and granddaughter of La Astrosa—know that there are neither pacts nor compacts, nor any such futile things, nor are any of them worth a farthing. And when men challenge each other, let the knife do its work and the red blood flow, so as not to have my mother's daughter present without giving her the pleasure of snapping her fingers in the face of the other. If you pretend you are fighting for me, it's a lie; you are wholly mistaken, and that not by halves. I love neither of you. Mingalarios of Zafra is to my taste, and he and I look upon you with scorn and contempt. Good-by, my braves; and, if you like, call my man to account."

She spoke, spat, smoothed the saliva with the point of her shoe, looking Pulpete and Balbeja full in the face, and went out with the same expressive movements with which she entered.

The two unvarnished braggarts followed the valorous Doña Gorja with their eyes; and then with a despicable gesture drew their knives across their sleeve as though wiping off the blood there might have been, sheathed them at one and the same time, and said together:

"Through woman the world was lost, through a woman Spain was lost; but it has never been known, nor do ballads relate, nor the blind beggars sing, nor is it heard in the square or markets, that two valiant men killed each other for another lover."

"Give me that fist, Don Pulpete."

"Your hand, Don Balbeja."

They spoke and strode out into the street, the best friends in the world leaving me all amazed at such whimsicality.

Single Kiss

In the castle of Mancoliero, not far from the city of Turin, there dwelt a widow of the name of Zilia Duca, whose consort died before she had attained her twenty-fourth year. Though extremely beautiful, her manners were somewhat abrupt, resembling rather those of a pretty rustic than of a polished city dame. She devoted herself to the education and future welfare of an only son, between three and four years old, and relinquished all idea of again entering into the marriage state. Entertaining somewhat narrow and avaricious views, she kept as small an establishment as she could, and performed many menial offices usually left to the management of domestics. She rarely received or returned visits; stealing out on the appointed fasts early in the morning to attend mass at an adjoining church, and returning home in the same private manner.

Now it was a general custom with the ladies in that part of the world, whenever strangers happened to arrive at their residence, to grant them a salute by way of welcome to their roof. But the lady of whom we speak proved for once an exception to this general and hospitable rule. For Messer Filiberto da Virle, a gentleman and a soldier of distinguished prowess and esteem, stopping at Moncaliero, on his way to Virle, chanced also to attend mass at the same church where Madonna Zilia was to be seen. Charmed with her graceful and attractive air, no less than with the beauty of her countenance, he eagerly inquired who she was; and though little pleased with the avaricious character which he heard attributed to her, he tried in vain to efface the impression she had made. He pursued, however, his journey to Virle, where after transacting his affairs, he resolved to retrace his steps to Moncaliero, not very far distant, and take up his residence there for some time. With this view he took a house not far from the castle, availing himself of every opportunity of throwing himself in the lady's way, and resolved at all risks, and whatever might be the labor, to induce her to relinquish the unsociable conduct of which she was accused.

After feasting his eyes long and vainly in her sight, he at length contrived to obtain the pleasure of an introduction; but she had scarcely spoken two words to him, when she excused herself, and retreated, as usual, home. In truth she had been short with him, and he felt it in such a way that he made a strong resolution, which he almost as suddenly broke, of renouncing all thoughts of her for ever. He next enlisted some of her own sex among her most intimate acquaintance to employ their influence with her to vanquish her obduracy, in order that, after having carried the outworks, he might take the castle of Moncaliero by storm.

But the enemy was on the alert, and all his efforts proved abortive. He looked, he sighed, he wrote, he went to mass, he walked before and behind the castle, in the woods, by the river-side, where he threatened to drown himself; but the lady's heart was more impregnable than a rock, harder than everything except his own fate; for she deigned

neither to smile upon nor to write to him. What should the wretched lover do? He had already lost his appetite, his complexion, and his rest, besides his heart, and really felt very unwell. Though physicians were not the persons to prescribe for such a case, they were nevertheless called in, and made him a great deal worse; for he was now rapidly advancing towards that bourne from which neither lovers nor travelers return; and without other help, it became very evident that the poor young gentleman would soon give up the ghost.

While his life hung suspended in this languishing state, one of his friends and fellow-officers, a happy fellow from Spoleto, hearing of his condition, came posting to his succor, determined at least to be in time for his funeral, and see that all due military honors were paid to his loving spirit. When he arrived, Messer Filiberto had just strength enough to tell the story of his love and the cruel disdain of the lady, intending afterwards, as he assured his friend, to think no more about it, but quietly to expire. His friend, however, having really a regard for him, and believing he would grow wiser as he grew older, strongly dissuaded him from the latter alternative, observing that he ought to think about it; that it was a point of honor on which he ought to pique himself to bring it, like a good comedy, to a happy conclusion.

"My poor Filiberto," he continued, "leave the affair to me, and be assured you shall speak to her as much as you please."

"That is all I wish," exclaimed the patient with a litle more animation, while a slight color suffused his cheek; "persuade her only to listen to me, and, trust me, I can manage the rest myself. But it is all a deception. What can you do, when I have wasted all kinds of love-messages, gifts, oaths, and promises in vain?"

"Do you get well; that is all you have to do," returned our Spoletino, "and leave the rest to me."

He spoke with so much confidence that the patient in a short time grew wonderfully better; and when the physician a few days afterwards stepped in, he gave himself infinite credit for the improvement which had taken place. Now the reader must know that the wits of Spoleto are renowned all over Italy; they are the most loose-tongued rattlers, the most diligent petitioners for alms in the name of St. Anthony; the most audacious and sleight-o-hand gentry in the world. They have a very excellent gift of talking and making something out of nothing; and no less of persuading people to be of their own opinion, almost against their will. Nearly the whole of that amusing generation who are in the habit of getting through the world by easing the rich and simple of their superfluous cash, who dance upon two poles, dole out the grace of St. Paul, charm the dancing serpents, or sing wicked songs in the public streets will be found to trace their birth to Spoleto.

Messer Filiberto's friend was well qualified, therefore, as a relation of these itinerant wits, to assist a brother in distress, especially in such a dilemma as that in which our hero found himself. Considering him, at length, sufficiently convalescent, our Spoletino fixed upon a sort of traveling pedlar to forward the designs he had formed for the relief of the unhappy lover.

Bribing him to exchange dresses, he took possesion for a period of his collection of wares, consisting of every article most tempting to a woman's eyes, either for ornament or for use.

Thus armed, he set out in the direction of Donna Zilia's residence, announcing himself as the old traveling merchant with a fresh supply of the choicest goods. These tidings reaching the ears of the lady, she sent to desire him to call at her house, which he directly entered with the utmost familiarity, as if by no means for the first time, and addressed her in the most courteous language he could command. Then opening his treasures, she entered upon a review of the whole assortment, displacing and undervaluing everything, while she purchased nothing. At length, fixing her eyes upon some beautiful veils and ribbons, of which she fancied she was in want, she inquired how much he expected for such very ordinary articles.

"If you will sell them. good man, for what they are really worth, I will take no less than five-and-thirty yards; but if you ask too much, I will not look at them; I will not have a single ell."

"My lady," replied the false merchant, "do my veils indeed please you? They are at your service, and say nothing as to the price; it is already paid. And not only these, but the whole of this excellent assortment is your own, if you will but deign to receive it."

"No, no, not so," cried the lady, "that would not be right. I thank you, good man; though I certainly should like to have them at as low a rate as I can. So ask what you please, and I will give what I please, and then we shall understand one another: you gain your livelihood in this way, and surely it would be cruel, however much I might wish it, to take them for nothing. So deal fairly with me, and I will give you what I think the goods are really worth."

"But, your ladyship, please you," replied the wary merchant, "I shall consider it no loss, but a favor, if you will condescend to receive them under no conditions at all. And I am sure if you possess as courteous a mind as your face betokens, you will accept these trifles presented to you on the part of one who would gladly lay down not only his whole property, but his life at your feet."

At these words, the lady, blushing celestial rosy red, eyed the merchant keenly for a moment.

"I am astonished to hear you talk thus, and I insist upon knowing who you really are. There is some mystery in all this, and I am rather inclined to think you must have mistaken the person to whom you speak."

The merchant, however, not in the least abashed, being a native of Spoleto, acquainted her in the mildest and most flattering terms with the long and passionate attachment entertained for her by poor Messer Filiberto, and the delicacy with which he had concealed it until the very last. Handsome, accomplished, rich, and powerful, he was prepared to lay all his extensive seigniories at her feet, and account himself the most fortunate of mankind. In short, he pleaded so eloquently, and played his part so well, that she at length, after a pretty long resistance, consented to see his friend. He then hastened back to Messer Filiberto, who overwhelmed him with the most rapturous thanks, and lost no time in preparing to pay a visit

to his beloved, who received him at the appointed hour in the drawing-room of her own house. There was a single maid-servant in her company, who sat at work in a recess, so that she could scarcely overhear their discourse.

Bending lowly before her, Messer Filiberto expressed his deep sense of the honor she had conferred on him, and proceeded in impassioned terms to relate the origin and progress of his affection, his almost unexampled sufferings, and the sole hope which still rendered his life supportable to him. He further assured her that his gratitude would be eternal, in proportion to the amount of the obligations under which she laid him. The sole reply which he received to his repeated and earnest protestations was, that she was resolved to remain faithful to the memory of her departed consort, and devote herself to the education of her only son. She was, moreover, grateful for his good opinion, though she was sure he could not fail to meet with ladies far more beautiful and more worthy of his regard.

Finding that all his efforts proved quite fruitless and that it was impossible to make any impression, he threw himself once more at her feet with tears in his eyes, declaring that if she possessed the cruelty to deprive him of all hope, he should not long survive. The lady remained silent, and Messer Filiberto then summoning his utmost pride and fortitude to his aid, prepared to take his leave, beseeching her only, in the common courtesy and hospitality of the country, to grant him in return for his long love and sufferings a single kiss, which, against all social laws, she had before denied him, although it was generally yielded to all strangers who entered an hospitable roof.

"I wish," replied Donna Zilia, "I knew whether your affection for me is so strong as you pretend, for then, if you will but take a vow to observe one thing, I will grant what you require. I shall then believe I am truly beloved, but never till then."

The lover eagerly swore to observe the conditions she should impose, and seized the price of the promise he had given.

"Now, Signor Filiberto," exclaimed the lady, "prepare to execute the cruel sentence I shall impose. It is my will and pleasure that you no longer trouble me with such entreaties for the future, at least for some time; and if you are a true knight, you will not again unseal your lips for the space of three years."

The lover was greatly surprised and shocked on hearing so harsh and unjust a sentence, though at the same time he signified his submission by his silence, merely nodding his assent. Soon after, making the lady a low bow, he took his departure for his own residence. There, taking the affair into his most serious consideration, he at last came to the fixed resolution of submitting to this very severe penalty, as a punishment, at least, for his folly in so lightly sporting with his oath. Suddenly, then, he became dumb, and feigning that he had met with some accident, he set out from Moncaliero on his return to Virle. His friends on finding him in this sad condition expressed the utmost sorrow and surprise; but as he retained his usual cheerfulness and sense enough to conduct his own affairs, they corresponded with him as well as if he had retained the nine parts of speech. Com-

mitting his affairs to the conduct of his steward, a distant relation in whom he had the highest confidence, he determined to set out on a tour for France, to beguile, if possible, the irksomeness of his situation. Of an extremely handsome person, and possessing noble and imposing manners, the misfortune under which he appeared to labor was doubly regretted wherever our hero made his appearance.

About the period of his arrival in France, Charles, the seventh of that name, was engaged in a warm and sanguinary war against the English, attempting to recover possession of the dominions which his predecessors had lost. Having already driven them from Gascony and other parts, he was busily preparing to follow up his successes in Normandy. On arriving at this sovereign's court, Messer Filiberto had the good fortune to find several of his friends among the barons and cavaliers in the king's service, from whom he experienced a very kind reception, which was rather enchanced by their knowledge of the cruel misfortune under which he labored. But as it was not of such a nature as to incapacitate him for battle, he made signs that he wished to enter into the king's bodyguards; and being a knight of well-known prowess, this resolution was much applauded, no less by his majesty than by all his friends. Having equipped himself in a suitable manner, he accompanied a division of the army intended to carry Rouen by assault.

Here he performed such feats of strength and heroic valor in the presence of the king as to excite the greatest admiration; and on the third attack the place was carried by storm. His majesty afterwards inquiring more particularly into the history of the valiant knight, and learning that he was one of the lords of Virle in Piedmont, instantly conferred upon him an office in his royal household, and presented him with a large sum of money as an encouragement to persevere in the noble career he had commenced, observing at the same time that he trusted some of his physicians would be enabled to remove the impediment in his speech. Our hero, smiling at this observation, expressed his gratitude for these royal favors as well as he could, shaking his fist at the same time, in token that he would punish his majesty's adversaries.

Soon after, a sharp skirmish occurred between the French and the enemy for the possession of a bridge. The affair becoming serious, and the trumpets sounding to arms, the king, in order to encourage his troops, galloped towards the spot. Talbot, the commander of the English forces, was already there, and had nearly obtained possession of the bridge. His majesty was in the act of encouraging his soldiers, when Messer Filiberto, on his black charger, passed him at full speed with his company. With his lance in rest, he rode full at the horse of Talbot, which fell to the ground. Then seizing his huge club, and followed by his companions, he made such terrible havoc among the English, that, dealing death in every blow, he shortly dispersed them on all sides, and compelled them to abandon their position on the bridge. It was with difficulty that their commander himself effected his escape; while King Charles, following up his success, in a short time obtained possession of the whole of Normandy.

On this occasion the king returned public thanks to the heroic Filiberto, and in the presence of all the first nobility of his kingdom invested him with the command of several castles, with a hundred men-at-arms to attend him. He now stood so high in favor at court, that the monarch spared no expense to obtain the first professional advice that could be found in every country, with the hope of restoring him to the use of speech; and, after holding a solemn tournament in honor of the French victories, he proclaimed a reward of ten thousand francs to be paid to any physician, or other person, who should be fortunate enough to discover the means of restoring the use of speech to a dumb cavalier who had lost his voice in a single night.

The fame of this reward reaching as far as Italy, many adventurers, induced by the hope of gain, sallied forth to try their skill, however vainly, since it was impossible to make him speak against his will. Incensed at observing such a concourse of people at his court under the pretence of performing experiments on the dumb gentleman, until the whole capital became infested with quacks, his majesty ordered a fresh proclamation to go forth, stating that whoever undertook to effect the cure should thenceforth, in case of failing to perform what he promised, be put to death, unless he paid down the sum of ten thousand francs. The good effect of this regulation was quickly perceived in the diminution of pretenders to infallible cures, few caring to risk their fortunes or their lives, in case of their inability to pay, though they had before been so liberal of their reputation.

When the tidings of Messer Filiberto's good fortune and favor at the French king's court reached Moncaliero, Donna Zilia, imagining that his continued silence must be solely owing to the vow he had taken, and the time being at length nearly expired, fancied it would be no very bad speculation to secure the ten thousand francs for herself. Not doubting but that his love remained still warm and constant, and that she really possessed the art of removing the dumbness at her pleasure, she resolved to lose no time in setting off directly for Paris, where she was introduced to the commissioners appointed to preside over Messer Filiberto's case.

"I am come, my lords," she observed, "hearing that a gentleman of the court has for some time past lost his speech, to restore to him that invaluable faculty, possessing for that purpose some secret remedies which I trust will prove efficacious. In the course of a fortnight he will probably be one of the most eloquent men at court; and I am quite willing to run the risk of the penalty if I perform not my engagement as required. There must, however, be no witness to my proceedings; the patient must be intrusted entirely to me. I should not like every pretender to obtain a knowledge of the secret I possess; it is one which will require the utmost art in its application."

Rejoiced to hear her speak with so much confidence on the subject, the commissioners immediately despatched a message to Messer Filiberto, informing him that a lady had just arrived from Piedmont, boasting that she could perform what the most learned of the faculty in France had failed to do, by restoring the dumb to speech. The answer to this was an invitation to wait

upon our hero at his own residence, when he recognized the cruel beauty who had imposed so severe a penance, and concluded at the same time that she had undertaken the journey not out of any affection for him, but with the most mercenary views.

Reflecting on his long sufferings and unrequited affection, his love was suddenly converted into a strong desire of revenge: he therefore came to a determination of still playing the mute, and not deigning to exchange a single word with her, merely bowed to her politely at a distance. After some moments' silence, the lady, finding that he had no inclination to speak, inquired in a gentle tone whether he was at a loss to discover in whose company he was. He gave her to understand that he knew her perfectly well, but that he had not yet recovered his speech, motioning, at the same time, with his fingers towards his mouth. On this, she informed him that she now absolved him from his vow, that she had traveled to Paris for that purpose, and that he might talk as much as he pleased. But the dumb lover, only motioning his thanks, still continued as silent as before; until the lady, losing all patience, very freely expressed her disappointment and displeasure. Still it availed her nothing, and, fearful of the consequences to herself if he persisted in his unaccountable obstinacy, she had at length recourse to caress and concessions, which, whatever advantage he chose to take of them, proved ultimately as fruitless to restore his eloquence as every other means.

The tears and prayers of the lady to prevail upon him to speak became now doubly clamorous, while she sorely repented her former cruelty and folly, which had brought her into the predicament of forfeiting either ten thousand francs or her life. She would immediately have been placed under a military guard, had it not been for the intercession of the dumb gentleman, who made signs that they should desist. The penalty, however, was to be enforced; but the lady, being of an excessively avaricious turn, resolved rather to die than to furnish the prescribed sum, and thus deprive her beloved boy of a portion of his inheritance.

When reduced to this extremity, Messer Filiberto, believing that upon the whole he had sufficiently revenged himself, took compassion upon her sufferings, and hastened to obtain an audience of the king. He entreated as a special favor that his majesty would remit the fine, and grant liberty to her, as well as to some other debtors, which, in the utmost surprise at hearing the sound of his voice, the king promised to do. He then proceeded to inform his majesty of the whole history of his attachments to the lady, and the strange results by which it had been attended to both parties, though fortunately all had ended well. Messer Filiberto then hastened to hold an audience with the lady, seriously proposing to give her a little good advice; and she was quite as much rejoiced as his majesty when she first heard him speak.

"You may recollect, madam," he observed, "that some time ago, when at Moncaliero, I expressed the most ardent and constant attachment to you, an attachment which I did not then think that time could have ever diminished. But your conduct in cheating me into the vow of silence, and your cruelty to me as well before that time as since,

have wrought a complete change in my sentiments towards you. I have acquired wealth and honors; I stand high in the favor of my monarch; and having, I think, taken ample revenge upon you by the fears and trouble you have experienced, I have not only granted you your liberty and your life, but ordered you to be freely supplied with every convenience and facility for your return home. I need not advise you to conduct yourself in future with care and prudence; in all the economical virtues you are reputed to be unrivaled; but I would venture to hint, that from the example I have in this instance afforded you, you will be more cautious how you sport with the feelings of those who love you, as it is an old saying, that the wily are often taken in their own nets."

He then provided her with an honorable escort and money to defray her expenses, while he himself not long after received the hand of a young beauty of the court, bestowed upon him by his royal master. By this union he received an accession of several castles and domains, and sent for his witty young friend from Spoleto to share with him a portion of his prosperity. Still retaining his favor at court upon the death of Charles VII. he continued to enjoy the same appointments and the same influence under Louis XI., his successor.

Love in Thule

In Seville, the city of her birth, Violante scandalized everybody by her beauty and her indiscretions. For at twenty she had the romantic habit of becoming a sister to the handsomest, most spirited and noble youths of her circle. She believed, quite mistakenly, of course, that if one's sentiments were lofty and one's conduct irreproachable one could afford to ignore all malicious gossipings. After being insulted several times she left Spain, first marrying a young Frenchman, who paid for the marriage with his health and his career.

They traveled for three years, then settled down in Paris, and at the end of her twenty-fifth year she was left a widow.

Her husband's family had not accepted her with very good grace, for despite their distinguished name they were people of a bourgeois mind, who looked upon every foreign woman as somewhat of an adventuress; and this young woman was not the sort of person to make them believe the contrary. And so, when she was left alone, they did nothing to aid her in keeping up her position in society, where her largeness of soul, a thousand reports from Spain concerning her, and her rare charm soon placed her in a compromising position. It happened, moreover, that she accepted the devotion of a young man, as one is happy to do at that age.

No one knew anything very definite about their relations, but as usual, people took the opportunity of thinking the worst. They were right. The important thing is that the pair treated one another during this liaison, which lasted for eight years, with infinite tact and delicacy. Nor did they purposely hurt one another, but on the contrary they ennobled one another by proving in their relations, that not everything is base and vulgar in this world. Thus they lived, he with nothing to occupy him, devoted and grateful; she, haughty and capricious towards the indifferent, all tenderness and devotion towards him. Marriage did not tempt them for a moment; it would have meant to introduce the element of obligation into the habits which they adopted without over much formality.

They met each other in society, at the theatre, and at the races, and almost every day they spent long hours together in their apartment in the Avenue Montaigne. The young woman slipped by insensible degrees from the best circles into male society alone, and seemed to be content with it. As for him, he never wearied of hearing her recount the adventures which had befallen her in Seville and in the course of her travels.

She told him of the wild asses of Africa, of the magnificent fruits in Andalusia, of the climate in the Belearic Isles: she found Italy a trifle insipid after her rugged Spain, she detested England, and cared nothing for Central Europe with the exception of the summer evenings in the Carlsbad restaurants, where the gypsies, known there as "Lothars," used to sing. He was in

accord with her in respect to all these matters, and enjoyed immensely the picturesqueness and vividness of the sensations and impressions which she communicated to him with the manner of a blasé child.

She took special delight in a romantic conception of life, which she had long ago evolved and which she loved so much that she absolutely refused to allow herself to be disillusioned of this young girl's dream; it would have been a splendid sort of existence, she said, to form a perfect friendship, as between brother and sister, with young men of very refined sensibilities and to live in an atmosphere of pleasure, beauty and mutual trust, like children overflowing with life, who kiss each other and share their toys. And he, amidst these daring fancies of hers, which had, after all, somewhat lowered his moral tone, experienced a peculiar pleasure, very subtle and very profound, in pitying this being made up of optimism, sweetness and sensuality. His mind, moreover, grew keener in following her, for she judged things without regard to morality, but only according to the dictates of her sense of beauty and her passion for refinement.

However, he did not see complete happiness in the face of this beloved friend. Did she perhaps desire more violent emotion, did she believe herself not perfectly loved? He would question her sometimes.

"No," she would answer, "I am not suffering, but it seems to me that there is no joy that I have not already experienced."

He clasped her in his arms without a word, for he felt she was right. Splendid horses, the most humble of admirers, everything that the most meticulous snobbism might exact—all these she had, and now there was nothing more for her to take pleasure in, not even at her dressmakers. In a word, she was suffering from having exhausted all sensations.

One idea to which she frequently kept reverting, was that of visiting the countries of the far East, and he understood very well that she had built up an image of them from Japanese vases, brocaded silks and certain amusing figures at the Chinese legation, a purely legendary conception utterly devoid of everyday reality. It was the one experience which this fanciful person had not made trial of. She believed in China, not having had the occasion to see that there too existed that element of imperfection which detracts from everything that inheres in all reality. She often said:

"When I grow old, my beloved, and feel myself utterly incapable of enjoying the things which I possess, I shall go down there, send you gifts, and die."

As she had in her as much romantic feeling as a person can well possess without actually descending to the ridiculous, this pleased her—to end her life mysteriously, and to drown herself in the crowd, just as a little sick animal drowns itself in the Seine. Ah! to die, on a blazing day, practically abandoned, in a hotel in Shanghai, and by her end compel the mercy of God!

At last, the feeling of blankness from which they suffered became so great that she judged that the moment had come when they ought to separate, and though he felt that neither could any longer contribute to the happiness of

the other, nevertheless his suffering was great, for it brought home to him definitely that their happiness was at an end. She told him of her painful intention, and then avoided discussion of it. This was partly out of consideration, and partly in order that his pleadings might not weaken her resolution. By a tacit agreement, they made a pretense of treating her undertaking merely as a trip to the countries of the East. Only the last time that they saw each other, in the apartment where they had lived through so much, they were terribly agitated. In the ante-room, dim in the closing day, near the door which for years had been for them a door to a universe apart, and which was now to be, they thought, only the entrance to a tomb, they united in a long embrace; not at all as a lover and his mistress, but of two beings of the same race who were met upon earth and who had never been hypocritical with each other.

"Promise me," she said to him, "that you will come here again sometimes. Always preserve our home, and let every trifle remain as we are leaving it today. If any woman chances to please you, do not have the least scruple about bringing her here, provided that she be a true friend, for my one wish is that you should be happy. But one evening, Christmas eve, I ask you to remain alone in this apartment."

She thought that on Chistmas great mysteries took place in nature; that on that night, things acquired souls, and became alive.

"Promise me," she repeated, "that you will come and think of our former joy amidst all the things that used to surround us."

She spoke with so much tenderness, in a tone so purified of all the pangs of jealousy, that both of them felt the bitter pleasure of the devotee, although they did not know to what or to whom they devoted themselves, and their eyes filled with tears. Ah! how wretched they felt at their impotence to give joy to one another, and perchance ashamed to find happiness only in their grief!

He did as she wished, and in that apartment, given over to silence, he came at irregular intervals to spend an hour calling up the images of the past. Although she had promised to write to him, and to give him her successive addresses, he received no word from the traveller. For the rest, if he suffered, it was a delicious melancholy, a sort of "pleasure in self-torture," in thinking that he had let his fair treasure, his beloved, be drawn into the whirlpool.

Now, when eight months had passed, and Christmas was approaching, a chest filled with precious objects from China, was delivered one day in the Rue Montaigne. He put off opening it. Then on the night, when, in order to celebrate the birth of the Infant Jesus, the faithful embrace in the churches, and the *viveurs* in the cabarets, he shut himself up in their favorite room.

The lamps, set in their wonted places, shed upon the same decorations those lights and shadows, amongst which he and Violante had passed so many evenings. Dressing-room and music-room, upon both of them was the spell of the sweetness of their intimacy and the memory of impassioned music. It was in this spacious room that he had been intoxicated with tenderness and beauty, and for him it was filled with a luminous

and ardent atmosphere, like the voice of Van Dyck in the lovesong of Siegmund. It was there, at the knees of his mistress, that little by little he had discovered beneath the mask of the woman of the world, the real woman, not at all a being made up of social graces and pretty ways, but instinct with humanity, and still very close to the little girl who used to play with dolls. That piano, those large mirrors, that dressing-room, those vast wardrobes so gay with ribboned lingerie, were not merely inanimate objects, but friends, well-beloved companions; those smelling-salts, which she played with while talking together, which she so often pressed to her appealing face, that blue vase in which she delighted to arrange the yellow tulips flecked with red and green, which went by the droll name of "parrot tulips," all the dainty fripperies, with which she had amused herself, all those toys for grown-ups—everything had taken on a certain spiritual quality, something which might almost have been called a soul, by the fact that it had known the caress of her touch, her glance, and her voice so tender with love. In her hands and beneath the breath of her young mouth, the flowers lived as though they actually were gentle living creatures; they were no more than vegetables now that the beloved one who animated them with her loving kindness was no longer there.

Little by little the objects began to speak with him. . . . First the great three-panelled mirror before which she had instinctively fallen into graceful poses, shadowed forth her beauty. "It is here," he said to himself, "when I admired the variety, the versatility, the thousand aspects of her charm, that beauty came to seem a living thing to me, the sum of a human being's usefulness. Violante gave me a distaste for museums and libraries, where things are motionless and barren. It is through her that I learnt the rather humid sensuality of beauty, and for me she replaced also the forests and the ocean and the splendor of night in the wilderness. For I possessed their fragrance, their infinity, and their melancholy, according as her hair was loosened in little-girl fashion, and her eyes drowned in bliss beneath my lips.

"Here are the dressing tables and the familiar objects which she would not let me touch, hastening to serve me herself, because it amused her, she said, but, I knew well, influenced by a deeper motive, by the voluptuous joy of self-humiliation—she, who was so charming, that she might love the better.

"It was at this window through which the light streamed so brightly, that I sometimes turned my eyes away from her face, on days when her features looked drawn, and her expression fatigued, not at all because the circles around her eyes were disagreeable to me—something left to desire in her would have made me love her the more—but because I feared lest, conscious of her momentarily lessened beauty, my looking at her should make her suffer.

"And here is the immense armchair, where we passed the first hours, always so forced, of our liaison. Outside it was a sad snowy afternoon; in us were mingled feelings of desire and calculation. But one day, two months later, when the first fire had spent itself, she uttered the profound truth at last—the occasion was a tactless remark with which she had offended me—which

touched the very core of existence more decisively than all the words of love, and even than the first *tutoiment* on dying lips. A terrible utterance, which makes a solemn affair of a caprice, and transforms those between whom it passes. How can I recreate the impassioned tone, the vibrant voice with which she said, slipping into my arms, 'In love, my dearest, there is no self-respect.' "

A saying of too strong a flavor, sensual as vice, and which, wrung from a creature of intoxicating finesse and grace, demoralizes all one's being more than twenty years of debauchery. Under that apparent nobility of sincere feeling, what a vessel in which to drown all the dignity of a man and all his pride! Love teaches disinterestedness, it is true; but it cuts us off from the best as well as from the worst. Sad and bitter summing-up! The conventional order of things, crime, humiliation, physical imperfection, nothing more had any meaning for these two who henceforth knew nothing in the world outside of themselves. In the mass of laws which rule all human beings love takes the place of pledges; it interprets everything in its own terms and breaks the chains of honor in order to bind us together as accomplices.

These are the memories which the room where he had lived through all these sweet moments with Violante brought back to the young man. Thus the profound feeling and the taste for life, and without any repugnance for untrammeled desire, the freedom from all formalities, this is what these friendly objects gave back to him, these backgrounds to their love, on Christmas Eve when things inanimate can speak to the soul.

Did he regret his beloved? Not at all. "For her to remain with us longer," he said to himself, "would have been too much, for we were surfeited; she could not have given us any more. Whereas now, although she is absent, everything which we could drink in from her soul dwells on in these things and in me. The millions of beings and things which today are dead, which make beautiful the forest, the going down of the sun, and the words of speech—each of these, having contributed its share to the enrichment of the universe, has nothing to do but die—and thus Violante has enriched us and left us.

"But Violante having enriched by herself the object of her love and these inanimate things has not yet played her role to its end. She has not yet expended all her vital force. Little unwearying seed, she has entrusted herself to the wind. She has gone to bear her soul across the sea."

At that moment he thought of the tokens which Violante had sent him from far distant countries—coffers filled with cold, mysterious trinkets, in which were placed kind thoughts of the traveller together with many tender memories. One by one he lifted out and handled the vases, the silks and the bronzes; vainly he essayed to surprise their secret, and make them to speak to him on this Chistmas eve.

"Among the thousand of objects down there in the bazaars, Violante has chosen these. She has chosen them, as she chose me, and as we chose so many pleasures with common accord; but these strangers can tell me nothing. She

went toward them, she understood them immediately and I do not understand them at all. Could it be possible that we were two beings living the same life, mingling our thoughts, so that even the most delicate nuances seemed gross and superflous, and nevertheless her instincts sighed for things which for me had no meaning?" Then he recalled that sometimes she saw in her dreams grimacing forms, fantastic and terrible, which troubled her and which she would not treat as mere nightmares. She delighted in embroidering, in the beautiful garments in which her ardent spirit slumbered, dragons, unicorns, the phenix, and the tortoise, which are the dream animals of the East. And descending further into the spirit of the exile, who often on summer evenings had tears of joy in her beautiful eyes, he recovered to memory the vibrating tones with which she used to describe with glowing words, the scent of roses, and death, in the narrow streets of Cordova. Thus this woman and temptress, formed to create life, loved all which made for disintegration, as if she would have joyed more in her beauty amongst dying things, and would rather have established her reign among the forces of decomposition.

All these wrappings filled the apartment with the decaying odor and the deadly fever which breathes from the grave.

"At this hour, doubtless," he dreamed, "in that country where decay is swiftest she has exhausted her nervous force and breathed away her entire soul. She has satisfied her boundless prodigality in lavishing upon these Chinese several aspects of her being with which I have never been able to come into contact. Perhaps, too, as I may think without conceit, she has transmitted to them much that she has gathered from me. Her task is ended. According to her vow, this coffer appears before me as a sign of her death. I have not the strength to combat the blow which these events are giving me. Although we were near to each other during these years, our destinies were separate. I shall not grieve; there is already descending forgetfulness, the dust which effaces individual forms. I am rather disgusted to see that my feelings are like a thin string of curious pearls which dance on a loose thread. Well it was that we played music in this room! It raised for a paradise beyond time and space, where our desires, mingling at moments, gave us the illusion that our being was one."

And now, having seated himself at the piano in the first light of that sad Christmas morning the young man hummed the love-song of Siegmund, thinking that perhaps in some hotel in the Orient she was choosing this night on which to die—this night when she knew that he was living over their past, and mingled with his grief at her death, the clear vision of the immutable ways of the world aroused in him a feeling of impotence and bitterness. Bitter distress to see how few were the grains loosened from the sand on the bank by the ripples set circling by the vessel which fell into the whirpool of Thule.

One Bed More

He had waited till evening. At about a quarter to seven he knocked at the door. A voice, which he did not immediately recognize, called out—"Come in." Without having to grope for it, he found the latch in the old place, raised it, opened the door and entered.

His wife was not surprised. Each knock at the door, during the four years of his absence, had always made her think; "Perhaps that's he coming back." She had a soup-tureen on her lap and was holding a loaf against her breast; she was slicing bread for the soup with a motion that was very familiar to him. Without a word, she placed the tureen and the bread on a chair, then, lowering her head, she clutched at her apron and covered her face. He did not have to see her eyes to know that she was weeping.

He sat down, leaned against the back of his chair and not finding anything to say, looked the other way. He was utterly at a loss.

The three children were hanging over the table around the lamp. The two little ones, Lucien and Marguerite, were playing lotto. They saw that a man had come in; a man like all the rest who came and talked of things which did not interest children. They went on with their game. But Antoinette, the oldest, who by now was almost thirteen, and who was busy writing her lessons, her exercise-book wide open before her, recognized him almost immediately, despite his beard, and cried, "Oh! It's papa!"

She had grown very much. She still had those little tricks on account of which he had loved to tease her, because she had always been so ready with some amusing rejoinder. She could not continue her work. She got up and, as he had his back turned, she placed her hand on his shoulder. He waited no longer, but looked around at her. She was not timid. She considered him triumphantly and said, "It's a long time since you have called me the fruit of your love!" She had always treasured that in her heart. When they had all lived together, he had hung around the inn all day long. He was a farrier by trade, but when a customer came to have a horse shod, his wife had to send Antoinette for her father. Whenever he saw the child coming for him among the drinkers, he would turn to his companions, saying, "Here's my daughter, gentlemen, my eldest daughter, the fruit of my love!" Each time this would make her furious.

He passed his hand over her hair, but did not dare to kiss her yet. Just at this moment the door opened at the push of a new arrival. Baptiste Pondet, a carpenter, came in with such assurance, that Larmingeat understood everything without any explanations. He rose as one rises when the head of the house comes in, and said: "Yes, you see it's me." Baptiste answered, "Sit down." Then he added, "I am like your wife; I always thought you would come back." Then as they were men, and men know life, they did not keep silent long. Larmingeat said, "Do you think I have made a blunder?" Baptiste Pondet explained in turn:

"Good Heavens! my good fellow! I—I've lost my wife."

"Ah! she's dead, that poor Adele."

"Yes, and I tell you it was all over quickly. It was an inflammation of the lungs, lasting three days. I had lost the habit of being alone. She's a good woman, your wife."

Larmingeat answered:

"As for me, what do you want? I had so many debts and no work. I thought they didn't need a drunkard round the house. I left to get a job, I said—But I might have written to her."

"Yes, at the end of three months, she understood that you had left her. Well, everyone has his faults."

They were silent for a minute. They knew each other well, these two. They were of the same class, they had served together in the 36th Artillery, at Clermont-Ferrand. Larmingeat remembered it and said, "Who would have thought of this when we were in the army."

Such was the return of Larmingeat. Such were the words he said.

Tears cannot last forever. The woman lowered the apron with which she was covering her face, and then she took hold of the tureen and the bread to go to an adjoining room, which served as kitchen. Antoinette also, seeing that she did not understand what was going on in the room, ended by joining her.

The two men remained alone, facing each other, and Larmingeat said: "I see that it would have been better for me not to return."

Baptiste Pondet answered, "Well, all right, but you had to know what had happened to your wife and your children."

They were very kind to him, as he sat shifting restlessly about on his chair, and seeming anxious to take his leave, like a person who has no reason for staying. Baptiste Pondet said to him:

"But you will remain for supper with us?"

He accepted because he could not do anything else. He could not go to the inn, for this was his home town. His wife, Alexandrine, who had somewhat recovered her confidence, heard Baptiste and was of the same opinion. She put her head through the doorway, not to make any remark, but merely to observe that there was only some soup and cheese and that that was little enough. Baptiste was a good fellow. He declared that they ought to get some pork and a bottle of wine. Larmingeat, not wishing to be behind, brought out twenty sous. He insisted on paying for his bottle and said, that if there was any change, they should buy sweets for the children. Then he added for politeness' sake:

"I am putting you to some expense."

The children removed their lotto-game quickly when they learned that someone was dining with them. They were well pleased and wished to set the table. Alexandrine brought out a tablecloth which she placed on the table. Larmingeat objected, but she said, "Goodness, I have it; I may as well use it when there's company." When she returned with a small ham, some brawn, the two bottles and cakes, they began the meal. Larmingeat was very hungry. He avowed it without ceremony, and the few words he uttered

were sufficient to set the conversation going.

They asked him how he managed things, where he slept, where he took his meals. It's true, he had not even told them that he came from Paris. He slept in a hotel. He ate in a restaurant. The hardest thing was to get someone to mend his clothes. He worked at the Metropolitan as the subway is called. He explained what the Metropolitan was. Baptiste said:

"Yes, they do all sorts of work."

They made a good meal of it. Langevin senior was no longer the pork-butcher, but his son's meat was very good also. The two bottles were used up. If Alexandrine had not said that she was not thirsty, there would not have remained enough wine for the cheese. Only one thing had been forgotten—cigars. But Larmingeat took out his purse once more, and gave ten sous to Antoinette, saying, "There, my child, get us two cigars." She was a charming child. She not only went willingly, but wanted her father to come with her; she would have walked him through the town. Her mother had to say to her, "Come on now, leave your father alone, and be careful not to tell the clerk that it's for him. No one has to know that he is here."

There was a fairly sad moment a little later when the children were being put to bed. It was easy enough with the little ones who were practically asleep at table. Larmingeat gave them two sous each, but they would not say, "Thank you, papa." They said, "Thank you, sir." When it was Antoinette's turn, she threw herself on her father. It seemed as if she had been quiet till then only to reserve her strength and to cry with more emotion. "I don't want him to go away. I don't want him to go away." She clung to his neck. Her mother said, "Look now, you are hurting him."

They were obliged to pull her away by force, tear her from him and promise that he would not go away. Larmingeat wept and Alexandrine and Baptiste wept with him. When she was gone, Baptiste said. "You saw that child? Well there's not a better to be found. I have always been sorry that she is not mine."

When the children were in bed, everybody began to yawn; it was getting so late. All the cigars had been smoked. As there was not a drop to drink, they had nothing to do. Larmingeat knew what he had to do. He said, "Well, I suppose I've got to go."

They did not keep him back. They merely asked him how he had come. He had come by train. He even told them that he had brought his valise along because at first he had wanted to stay. His wife said:

"Heavens, you should not have left the first time. What can you expect? I had to settle down. I cannot keep on marrying and unmarrying all the time. However, it turned out well."

There was a train at eleven. The station was six kilometers away and it would not do to be late as the train did not wait. Before he went, Baptiste, in one of those moments in which one sums up all that one has said, remarked:

"You see how things are with us? My furniture is here, there is one bed more than in your time."

He showed him the arrangement of the rooms. The landlord had made

some repairs. He led him into the children's room. The walls had been papered and the chimney, which used to smoke, had been fixed. The children were tight asleep. Larmingeat did not dare to kiss them, for fear of disturbing their sleep. He said, "I see that you are really comfortable."

He kissed Alexandrine before leaving, then as Baptiste stretched out his hand, he said, "Come, old fellow, let us kiss, too."

Her Seven Marriages

ADELINE was the daughter of a rich French merchant; a young lady who, if not quite as prudent, was perhaps as beautiful as Penelope, and could number almost as many admirers soon after she had entered into her teens. In truth, she was a great favourite; and advocates, court retainers, members of parliament, officers, and general officers seemed to vie with each other for her good opinion; but they had hitherto all met with the same reception, namely, that flat little monosyllable, no! At length a handsome young officer of the name of Alson had the happy fortune to obtain her good graces, but her father still shook his head. He was of a good old family, he admitted, only he had hardly a stiver to bless himself withal, except what came out of the military chest; and why this should entitle him to a preference over so many wealthy and noble offers he was at a loss to account. M. Molinet, however, did not belong to that class of cruel fathers who boast of the right divine of tyrannizing over their children, and by the combined effect of frowning and fuming, and fretting and petting, mixed with a little solitary confinement and low diet, bring their girls into a fit frame of mind to bear the matrimonial yoke along with some ugly, hateful-looking wretch, whom they would otherwise, perhaps, have by no means admired. So, without making much ado about nothing, this sensible French father, after a few imprecations which helped him to recover his gaiety, no longer withheld his consent. "The young fools like one another," he said; "and the boy wants nothing but money, which, I dare say, he will allow me the honour to supply. By such means his valour will entitle him to a captain's commission at a jump; another and another, till he reaches a colonel's; and it will not sound amiss, when the world, in my hearing, shall designate the commander of a whole heroic regiment with the dear name of son—the wealthy old merchant's son."

In a short while Lieutenant Alson's promotion began, and kept pace with his father-in-law's prophecies of his valour. When he had risen a few degrees, Molinet agreed to celebrate his marriage with his daughter in a magnificent manner. As the young lady, however, was only yet in her fifteenth year, and her father quite doated upon her, he had so contrived it, in consideration of her youth and his own old age, to have her company a year or two longer; and on the same morning that the ceremony was solemnized his son's regiment received orders to march, and he peremp-

torily insisted upon its commander marching along with it upon a foreign destination.

The parting scene was truly tender and romantic, but the old merchant conceived that he was doing his duty (for he believed she was too young to encounter the trials of the married state), and it did not move him a whit. Alson's sole consolation was in the hoped-for termination of the American War, which would enable him to return speedily to his own country; while he had, at all events, secured his prize,—barring the usual chances of being drowned, shot, captured, or knocked upon the head.

And truly his name seemed to have been entered upon the debit side of the day book of destiny; for though his regiment joined the party of the English colonists in their contest against the mother country, it so happened that our hero was wounded and taken prisoner by a troop of Indians, allies of the British forces, in the first engagement. Fortunately, they neither sacrificed nor ate him, contenting themselves with the torture of curing him of his wounds, which, with their assistance, left him a cripple for life. This he found to be a serious impediment in the way of making his escape from the swift-footed sable chiefs, though he was over-persuaded to make the attempt by one of his fellow-prisoners. The latter was quick enough to secure his retreat, but the unlucky Alson was overtaken while limping at an extraordinary pace, in the hope of rejoining his young bride and his wealthy father-in-law, with the addition of enjoying a quiet pension for life. Poor fellow! he was caught when within a stone's throw or two of the American lines, and immediately compelled to limp his way back again, with an Indian spear by way of goad pricking him in the rear. On his arrival he was thrown into a large wooden cage, with orders to be fattened, as soon as possible, for one of the chiefs' table, whose stomach refused almost every other kind of food.

Meanwhile Victor, the young officer who accompanied him in his flight, under plea of extreme sickness and his late sufferings, obtained leave of absence, and proceeded back to his own country. During his captivity he had heard a great deal in praise of the beauty and accomplishments of Adeline, while conversing with the unfortunate Alson. Aware, at the same time, of her vast fortune, a thought now struck him, on which he continued to ponder during his whole voyage home. He conceived that he might possibly be fortunate enough to supply Alson's loss; for he had little doubt but that the sable heroes would very quickly dispose of their prisoner in such a way as to leave him no source of uneasiness on that head.

Taking this, at all events, for granted, and flattered with the idea of his future prospects, he hastened with the rueful looks of an undertaker to the house of M. Molinet, and without much ceremony regretted that he was the bearer of ill tidings. A little shocked, the good merchant began to pull almost as long a face as his own. The wily Victor, wishing to make a still deeper impression, so as to introduce himself in the character of a comforter, entreated that he would not alarm himself; and drawing his hand across his eyes, at the same time heaving a few sighs, he observed that his poor friend Alson had unfortunately been scalped and murdered be-

fore his eyes by a party of wild Indians.

M. Molinet uttered an exclamation of horror, that brought his whole household together, old and young. Victor was still singing his doleful dirge as they gathered round; and he next drew forth a packet of forged letters, in order to give a greater air of veracity to his story. This, however, was superfluous: no one offered to question the truth of his statements, while his well-feigned sorrow recommended him strongly to his new friends, as Alson's companion and fellow-soldier. Here he flattered himself that he had laid a good foundation for his future plans; and in a few days he repeated his visit, when he had the pleasure of being introduced to the lovely Adeline.

Mutual sorrow and sympathy in regard to the young soldier's fate drew them into conversation, and Victor was quite charmed with her manners, while her beauty surpassed his expectations. By degrees his person and language appeared equally interesting to Adeline, and not many months had elapsed before their acquaintance began to ripen into a more tender regard. M. Molinet, being satisfied that his connexions were respectable, and not in the least aware of the stratagem which he had adopted in order more effectually to succeed in his views, was shortly afterwards prevailed upon to give his consent.

The mourning having at length ceased, Adeline cast aside her widow's weeds, and gave her hand to the happy Victor, who now fancied he had secured the fair prize for life. But Fortune, that had hitherto shown herself so remarkably favourable, now, when he stood on the very brink of Paradise, began, like a vile jilt as she is, to change her tone. He was much in the situation of a spoiled child when the careless nurse slips its leading-strings: he fell, not figuratively, but actually and heavily, as he was cutting too high a curvet in the plenitude of his satisfaction in the bridal dance. He fell on the smooth chalked floor, and disjointed one of his thighs: a compound fracture, which would require him to lie in one position for the period of one or two months. What a horrible contrast! the bridal chamber was turned into a sick-room, his bride became head nurse, and all his fondest hopes disappeared in surgical operations.

His recovery was equally tedious and vexatious, and before he grew at all convalescent another character appeared upon the scene. Victor felt not a little alarmed on learning that Clermont, another young officer who had been captured by the Indians, had just arrived in Paris. His first question on arriving at the hotel was respecting the residence of M. Molinet, and he did not long leave Victor in suspense as to the particulars of his escape and the fate of Alson. In fact, he was the bearer of letters from the latter to his wife, and he was naturally somewhat surprised on hearing from his host that the lady had contracted a second marriage; he was still more astonished to find that Victor was the second husband; but he revealed nothing of what he knew to his host, being first determined to have an interview with the wily usurper of Alson's rights, of whom he knew enough, before delivering his letters. Victor lost all courage, and looked quite crestfallen as Clermont was announced, and briskly followed up his name with the familiarity of a former comrade, into the sick

man's chamber. "Oh, Victor!" he cried, "what a wretch you are! what a piece of villany you have committed against Alson! He is alive, poor fellow; and I have brought letters from him for his wife—I must go and deliver them."

"Alive?" exclaimed Victor, "Alson alive? impossible! why, he was overtaken and put to death by the Indians in my company, while we were trying to make our escape."

"Stop there, Victor: he was overtaken, but not killed; though he would have been, and eaten too, had it not been for a party of the colonists, who fell on the Indians during the night, and rescued our friend from his perilous situation. But come, I must deliver my letters."

"For God's sake! my good Clermont," cried the wretched Victor, at the same time tumbling head foremost in his hurry to prevent him, "for God's sake, help me up—I fear I have broken my leg again; I beseech you not to put the climax to my misery. Truly, take half of all I am worth, and do not betray me. Command me in everything for ever after; but do spare me; and try to raise me upon the sofa before Adeline comes in."

Touched with pity at his helpless situation, Clermont assisted the unlucky patient from the ground, who feigned a vast deal more than he really felt.

Meanwhile Adeline, who had heard from one of the maidens that a stranger had arrived and was then in her husband's room, and likewise hearing high words, ran full of anxiety to inquire.

Victor was now in momentary dread of beholding the fatal letter drawn from Clermont's pocket; but the latter was too magnanimous, and too much delighted at the sight of Adeline's surpassing charms and loveliness, to think of causing her any such alarm and unhappiness. It is true that he enjoyed the unhappy man's suspense and tortures, and would then burst out into an uncontrollable fit of laughter to see the rueful faces which he made, and which his lovely bride put to the account of his lame leg, no better for his fall. Clermont lingered long enough to catch the fascinating poison that lurked in Adeline's bright eyes; his soul was fired at the first interview; and it was clear that Victor's last sands of promised happiness and good fortune—most tantalizing good fortune—were nearly run. He no longer felt so indignant as he ought at Victor's base conduct; he rather sighed more effectually to imitate it; and having, like him, been in the habit of pleasing himself whenever he well could, a thought suddenly struck him to avail himself, as far as possible, of the information and influence which he possessed.

Adeline, pleased to observe that there seemed nothing unpleasant between the two gentlemen, as she had feared, soon after left the room. Clermont again turned to his companion with a portentous frown upon his brow. "I am thinking, my good sir, that you have brought yourself into a very pretty dilemma indeed. Your situation is desperate; and besides, I never could reconcile it to my conscience to become the means of concealing your treacherous conduct from the parties concerned. I say, sir, too, that it would be ill discharging the trust reposed in me by our unhappy friend Alson, in any degree to countenance so base a conspiracy against his peace. No, I am decided in the

course I shall take; to deliver his letters, along with other proofs, showing that, though infirm, he is still in existence. The sole lenity which in such an affair I can be induced to grant would be to postpone the communication until you were sufficiently recovered to be removed; and the sooner you can save yourself by flight, the better it will be. I can afford you no greater proof of my regard; for if you continue here much longer, I shall, however reluctantly, be compelled to expose you to the world. Spare yourself the trouble of any further entreaties,—I cannot listen to them; I cannot consent to become an accessory to so cruel an imposition."

Having come to this explanation, Clermont took his leave, leaving the unlucky patient in no very enviable state of mind. He was unable even to make his escape; and he lay ruminating all possible plans, either for counteracting Clermont's influence or for effecting an able retreat. It was in vain, however, that he beat his brains for a satisfactory solution of his difficulties. The only resource that offered itself to his choice seemed to be that of throwing himself voluntarily upon Adeline's mercy, and relying upon the strength of her attachment, for a happy termination of the business. Should he, however, be successful in his appeals to her tenderness and compassion, still he would have to encounter the storm raised by her incensed friends and her father, which in his present helpless situation would be doubly trying. At length, finding nothing that was likely to relieve him from his awkward dilemma, he resigned himself quietly to his destiny, desirous only of getting his head out of the scrape with as little damage as possible; and, wearied with conjectures, he fell asleep.

Adeline remarked that there was something or other pressing upon his spirits, and with a thousand endearing words she sought to discover the cause. But he only affected greater cheerfulness, and lavished fresh thanks and caresses for all the affection and devotedness which, he said, she had so generously shown him. By such means he removed her suspicions, and she regarded the assiduous visits on the part of Clermont only in the light of friendly inquiries after his friend's health. Entertaining, however, the designs before mentioned, it was his object not to permit Victor's health to get so fully established as to take a final and affectionate leave of his young bride; he must be removed suddenly and secretly. For this purpose Clermont now daily made his appearance with Alson's letters in his hand, which he held before Victor's eyes, while he threatened the unfortunate wight with instant exposure if he longer refused to quit the field.

This, after many vain appeals for pity, he was compelled to do. Under pretence of taking a first airing, Clermont provided him with a conveyance, and then destroyed those important documents which he had held up, like the angel's flaming sword behind our first parents, to drive the unluckly Victor out of Paradise. Having accompanied him some distance, Clermont received his parting letter for Adeline, and returned in the same carriage to M. Molinet's house.

"Where is Victor? what has happened?" was the first inquiry.

"He bids you an eternal farewell!" replied Clermont, "and you may rejoice

that you will never behold his face again. His own letter will inform you that he basely deceived you, that he forged the account of Captain Alson's death, and married Adeline during his lifetime. I threatened to reveal his treachery, and he quickly decamped, well knowing that he was not legally united to your daughter, nor entitled to her person any more than to her fortune. Poor Alson is, indeed, since dead; but this does not in any degree diminish his guilt or ratify his marriage. It is now just three months since my friend died in prison, where we were both confined for above a year. 'Should you ever,' said he, 'be fortunate enough to reach our dear country, salute my excellent Adeline, my dearly beloved wife!' Shortly afterwards he breathed his last, and peace be to the ashes of my respected friend! He beguiled the hours of our imprisonment with his sweet and noble discourse, and he even watched over me, I may say, after his decease; for as they were carrying his remains out of the prison, I contrived to make my escape."

At this account both father and daughter stood wrapt in astonishment, and in particular Adeline fixed her eyes in breathless wonder upon the ingenious inventor of so many fictions. He retailed them with so much ease and confidence, answered every question, and gave the whole fable so natural an air as to carry conviction to their hearts, equal to anything that was ever felt for the truth of the Gospel.

The lovely bride of two absent husbands then expressed her lively gratitude to the intended third, for his timely interference in rescuing her out of the hands of so base a character, while the good old merchant begged for the favour of his friendship and more frequent visits.

But the artful Clermont checked his wishes for a short period, in order not to betray his own project. He called so very seldom, that, being bent upon evincing their gratitude, they were obliged to send him formal invitations. In fact, so deeply smitten was he with the charms of Adeline, that he was almost afraid of anticipating his views upon her, and tried to accost her with all the starched politeness of some grey-haired matron during his first visits. Yet he was handsome and entertaining; and Adeline, a little piqued at his excessive indifference, sought to thaw the icy region about his heart by her sunny smiles and glances, and a thousand delicate little attentions. He replied, however, very cautiously, though in such a way as showed he was quite sensible of her power, and feared to trust himself within the enchanted circle of her charms.

To smooth the way more effectually to his wishes, he next brought forward the agreeable intelligence of the rogue Victor's death. It was apparently under the sign manual and seal of the curate who had confessed him during his last moments, stating how he had fallen sick at a little village, as the curate was passing through, how he had received the sacrament, and how he had died in peace and blessedness shortly afterwards. This account of his decease he, the curate, had been induced to furnish at poor Victor's request, which duty he had discharged after giving him decent interment.

Adeline was again free; and how happy that she was released from so

awkward a kind of engagement! Of this the arch-traitor Clermont was soon assured by the manner of his reception: it was no longer difficult to perceive that his artful diffidence and constrained demeanour had pleaded his cause more effectually than, in such circumstances, his utmost assiduities could have done. The coldness of his manner gradually died away; he began to assume his real character; every day they grew more and more passionately attached to each other; and Adeline gave him her hand with greater pleasure than she did to either of her other husbands.

A splendid banquet welcomed the happy pair from the altar; the guests made their appearance; and the afternoon was at length far advanced. The sound of a carriage was now heard advancing at a smart pace up the street, and it drew up at M. Molinet's door. "Ha!" cried the good host; "an idle guest, by our Lady, but he drives briskly up."

All eyes were now turned towards the door; and, to the surprise of all the company, in rushed the deceased Victor, with his drawn sword in his hand, which he pointed with threatening gesture at Clermont. "Up, up, and defend your life!" he cried; at the same time dragging the astonished bridegroom with firm grasp out of the hall.

Every guest sat too much terrified at his ghastly appearance to interfere, feeling quite assured that it was wholly supernatural. So that, with the assistance of his servant, Victor had thrust the unlucky bridegroom into his carriage and driven away with him before anybody had sufficiently recovered his senses to think of a rescue.

When arrived a short distance from the city, Victor called to the coachman to halt, and bursting into a loud laugh, he said, "Well, friend, there are two knaves instead of one, and one raven must not pull out the other's eyes. There would be little use in hanging ourselves, if others will save us that trouble, for what we have done. My object in carrying you off arises from the most disinterested motives; it will save you from a great deal of plague; for, as you were kind enough to bring me tidings of Alson, I have now to inform you that he is actually in Paris, and would speedily have fallen upon you like a thunderbolt, and sacrificed both his wife and you to his fury. We have both of us the best reason in the world for keeping out of his way; for he is already half-witted from the effect of his Indian adventures, and being fattened, during the course of a whole month, for the chief's table."

"I wish he had eaten him, then," exclaimed Clermont, in very ill humour; "the fellow must have as many lives as a cat."

"So it seems! But we must wait patiently till the affair has blown over, and meanwhile seek some safe retreat, in a corner of the kingdom and near a seaport, in case the madman should run desperate and proceed to extremities against us."

Now, this was all a fresh tissue of lies, invented by Victor to revenge himself. So far from being in Paris, Alson had been taken prisoner during his voyage home, and was now passing his time in England. Having given out that he had left France under an assumed name, Victor, after parting with his rival, had returned, and kept a watchful eye upon all his proceedings. In order

more effectually to screen himself, and to get his rival completely in his power, he permitted him to accept the hand of Adeline, and then seized upon him in the manner that has just been related. Clermont easily fell into the snare, and no longer ventured to think of retracing his steps to Paris, when he believed that Alson, whom he had disposed of in so summary a manner, had again appeared on the scene of action. Half stupefied with the news, he suffered himself to be rolled away, as he had been taken, in his rich bridal apparel, without hat or gloves, and arrayed from head to foot in silk; while Adeline was thus deserted by her third husband, and left to reflect upon her wayward lot alone.

Such a series of unexpected occurrences almost turned the old merchant's head. He began to be alarmed lest they should afford a topic of scandal to the whole city; and after a short consultation with his daughter, he came to the resolution of quitting Paris, and retiring into the country for a short time.

So having settled his affairs, he proceeded, accompanied by his daughter, about eighty leagues into the country, where he purchased an agreeable residence, and spent a whole year, more to his own than to Adeline's satisfaction. So sudden and striking a contrast was too trying and too solitary, after the loss of three husbands, though she had already almost banished them from her mind. For no one any longer doubted the decease of Captain Alson, her first betrothed; while, in regard to both the others, it was currently reported, and in a short while generally credited, that they had fought a duel and fallen by each other's hands. Since the night of their strange disappearance they had neither of them been heard of; until one day in a wood at some distance from Paris two bodies were found dreadfully mangled, and there seemed no longer any doubt of their being the two ill-fated lovers; at least such was the account that reached M. Molinet and his daughter. It was also stated that the bodies had been interred, after remaining aboveground until their features were no longer discernible, and no persons coming forward to lay claim to them.

However, to set the matter at rest, M. Molinet sent for the chief witness who had given evidence on the inquest; and having received from him an account of the persons of the deceased, he found it agreed in many points with his two sons-in-law; a discovery which so greatly delighted him that, in the height of his satisfaction, he cried out, "Ay, the knaves! you describe them to a hair; and both dead and buried, you say?"

With this consolatory assurance, he hastened to his daughter Adeline, and they now began to visit with their neighbours and see a little more of the world, while they even talked of returning the ensuing winter to Paris. Before that period arrived, however, the old gentleman had been again solicited for his consent,—his consent for the fourth time! and he gave it with much the same easy temper as on former occasions; only his daughter was this time to be united to a young nobleman, Baron Marly.

The marriage ceremony was performed without the slightest interruption. The feast and the dance passed pleasantly away, and the bridemaids were already busied in disarraying the

fair Adeline of her ornaments and jewels, when, as fate would have it, a long and loud resounding knock was heard at the hall door, enough to throw a nervous patient into fits. It was just midnight, too; yet one of the footmen had courage enough to open the door; and in stepped a shabby-dressed man with a wooden leg, and, limping as fast as he could along the hall, begged to be allowed an interview with the host. The servant grinned at him over his shoulder, and said that it would be better to postpone it to the following day.

"No, my good friend, it will not," replied the stranger; "my affair will admit of no delay. I must see your master this moment."

But the man only stared and shook his head, as if in contempt of his request. Upon this the stranger, flying into a passion, raised his crutch. "Go, thou base varlet, or I will break every bone in thy skin!" And the footman ran to acquaint his master with this very unseasonable visit.

M. Molinet made his appearance in his nightgown and slippers. With a presentiment of something wrong, he looked the stranger sharply in the face, as he limped towards him, with a black patch over his left eye, and a great plaster on the other cheek. The good old host uttered an exclamation of alarm at the very sight of him.

"Who are you, sir?" he inquired in a subdued and quivering tone, "and what is your pleasure with me?"

"Alas! don't you know me?" sighed the stranger; "don't you know your own son-in-law Alson?"

Poor M. Molinet started back several yards at one bound, raised up his hands in perfect wonder, and then called out to a servant at some distance from them, "For God's sake, run,—call my daughter and her husband; and make haste—make haste!"

"Nay *I* am already here, father," observed the one-legged man.

"Oh, unhappy wretches as we all are!" cried the poor distracted father of so many sons, pacing backwards and forwards, and looking ruefully up the staircase, to see whether they would ever come.

Baron Marly first made his appearance, attired in a rich and elegant undress; looking as proud and glorious as Mars himself, just before he was caught with the lovely wife of ugly limping Vulcan, who could scarcely have cut a more sorry figure than the one-legged man now did. The baron could not help smiling at the stranger, as he said, "What are your commands with me, father? I was just this moment retiring for the night."

"But I will take care that you never shall," cried the lame man, at the same time striking his crutch in most threatening style upon the ground.

"Is the fellow out of his senses?" returned the baron, with a glance of contempt.

Poor M. Molinet was now quite beside himself. He trembled sadly at the necessity he was under of introducing the gentlemen to one another on this occasion. He did it, but it was with a very ill grace.

"Fine doings, indeed!" exclaimed the crutchman, again stamping his wooden leg, more fiercely than before, upon the ground. "It is lucky, however, that I am arrived in time to prevent this baron from casting a stain upon my honour

and that of my family. You will please, father, to show him to the very farthest chamber from my wife's and mine that you can find in the house; I shall keep strict watch on the outside."

At these words Baron Marly instantly mounted his high horse of noble blood, and replied, with an air of disdain, "Night watches, my good fellow, do not seem very well adapted to your present crippled condition, and I will spare you that trouble. As matters turn out, you are quite welcome to your first bargain, with all the manorial rights and appurtenances thereto belonging. In fact, I shall be happy to make the transfer, by which you will help me to untie a knot which I was beginning to fear might chance to be tied too tight. For my part, I am a friend to freedom; and there are some of my relations at court who will not be sorry to hear of what has happened, for truly I have had very little peace since my alliance with this very worthy family, because they imagined that henceforward I was about to unite myself with that less shining but useful class of honest citizens. They solemnly declared that my marriage had raised an eternal barrier between me and them, between the city and the court; and that they knew how to respect their own station, if I did not. This was a sad blow in the face of my escutcheon; and I should, doubtless, soon have died of mortification, had not this lucky incident restored me to my injured nobility and pride. This somewhat consoles me for the personal loss of a lady for whom I entertained the greatest tenderness and esteem. But I am no sentimental worshipper of sighs and tears. I entreat you, therefore, my dear M. Molinet, to break this little matter to your daughter—to present her with my parting regards, and wish her all happiness and good fortune. So farewell, gentlemen; if you have any commands to Paris, I shall feel most happy to be the bearer. There I shall take out a formal divorce, and so the matter rests." With an air of lordly *nonchalance* he turned upon his heel, and left his father-in-law lost in astonishment at the strange situation in which he stood.

"Nay, let the nimble puppy run," cried the man with the crutch; "and cheer up, old gentleman: you see you have got me quite safe; I wish I could add quite sound; but anyhow safe home again. True, I am a bit of a cripple; but what of that?—I am none of your noble imposters—I am Alson, your honourable son-in-law. I hope Adeline will not think the worse of me; though, I confess, I do not much relish the thought of our first interview: better perhaps to put it off until to-morrow. You will thus have time to reconcile her to the change of partners; but, as you seem rather weary and nervous, you had better yourself retire to rest, and let me likewise be shown to a chamber. To-morrow I will amuse Adeline and you with some account of my adventures in America. You will be much astonished, if not entertained; but for to-night, dear father, not a word more—let us get a little rest."

M. Molinet, like one half moon-stricken, tottered out of the room; he replied not a word; and his son was obliged to shake him well by the shoulders and stamp his wooden leg, before he could make him comprehend that he wanted to be shown to his chamber.

Just at this moment one of Adeline's

maids came running to say that her young mistress had fallen into fits. She had heard the uproar, and insisted upon being instantly attired, in order to arrive in time to prevent any fatal consequences—having already lost two husbands, who had fallen a sacrifice to their mutual fury; but such was the tumult of her emotions, that she fainted in the bridemaid's arms.

Greatly concerned at this event, the cripple bridegroom observed that had he not unluckily been so shabbily dressed, and altogether cut so very dismal and forbidding a figure, with the patches on his wounds and his wooden leg—which might perhaps frighten her into fits again as she was recovering—nothing should keep him from her presence. "Besides, my crutch makes such a plaguey loud noise in walking, she might imagine some kobold or house-goblin was coming into her chamber. Such things she must get used to by degrees; so, my good girl, I must be content with thy recommending me most affectionately to thy sweet mistress, and here is my father-in-law will go along with you."

Poor M. Molinet, quite puzzled what to think or what to do, suffered himself to be led, like a man walking in his sleep, into his daughter's chamber, while his son-in-law walked another way into his own.

At this moment, the baron's servants having packed up his wardrobe and brought the coach, he was heard giving his orders respecting these two most important and favourite subjects of his thoughts; and then he rattled off along the pavement, in all the offended yet newly recovered dignity of his ancient house. Adeline, on her side, again passed a lonely night, on the very day of her fourth nuptials, besides being half frightened to death.

On the morrow of this eventful evening M. Molinet's household was early in motion. The good host himself began at length to console himself with the idea that even a wooden-legged son-in-law was preferable to none, and hastened downstairs with a fixed determination to welcome him in a hearty and hospitable style. The latter, however, seemed to think more of a good night's rest than rising at an early hour to reclaim the hand of his beautiful betrothed. The clock had already struck nine, breakfast was waiting, yet the sluggard showed no signs of appearance: he had not even rung his bell; and the old merchant, beginning to feel impatient for his first meal, waited and grumbled; until declaring that he must be one of the seven sleepers, he ordered one of the servants to knock, and to knock hard, at his door; for it was now near eleven o'clock, and the old gentleman, in momentary dread of an attack of his spasms, was fast helping himself to whatever came nearest to him. Before he had half done, however, the lacquey came to inform him that he had knocked repeatedly at the lame gentleman's door, but had received no answer.

His master shook his head wistfully, and, ordering the servant to walk first, followed him upstairs, and bade him enter the room; not liking the risk of receiving any further shock added to that of the former night.

So he stationed himself at the head of the stairs, and called out to the man from time to time, "Now, John, is he asleep?" "No, sir!" "Is he awake?"

"No, sir!" "What, is he dead, then?" "Oh, no, sir, he is only gone—at least I cannot find him." "Gone!" repeated the merchant, advancing a little more boldly; "what, crutch, and leg, and all?" "No, sir; his leg is here, only it is nothing but a cork!" "Nothing but a cork!" repeated the old merchant, "then I dare say he must have a stock of them, and it is that, perhaps, which makes him so light afoot. The scoundrel! the base deserter! to think of running away from his own wife and father the very morning after returning to them! Surely I am bewitched, or this is all a dream. It cannot be: I am perhaps too hard upon him to suspect him; he has, perhaps, only got up in the night, and gone into the garden, and then been unable to find his way back into the right room. Do you run into the garden, John, and I will examine the other bed-rooms; he must be somewhere—he cannot be gone: call Adeline, call all the women, and the men, and the children, about the place; bid them look sharp everywhere—he cannot be gone!"

There was soon a general muster, and the house was searched from top to bottom; but he was neither in the garret nor the cellar: the new son-in-law was gone! At length, when it came to the old porter's turn to be examined, who kept the lodge gates, and just then came hobbling up, he declared that about daybreak a lame, ill-favoured kind of man, with black patches on his cheeks, most like a broken-down soldier, had ordered him to unbar the gate, as he was going to see after some of his luggage which was left at the next inn, but he said nothing about coming back.

With this gleam of hope M. Molinet dispatched a messenger to the place, but no person answering the porter's description had been there.

The lovely Adeline sat pale and weeping in her chamber: until this trying moment she had borne her strange adventures and vicissitudes with the sweet temper and patience of an angel; but this was too much. There was no affectation in her sufferings; her tears and sighs were genuine, for she had really loved Alson—he was her first choice; and she sank overpowered with grief on learning this his second and more cruel loss.

Her father, little less affected at witnessing her grief, retired with downcast looks, and full of perplexing thoughts to devise some method of proceeding, to his own chamber. The reader, however, shall not be left in the same dilemma, but shall forthwith be introduced behind the curtain of the mystery; as here follows: In the first place he need hardly be informed that those two arch-hypocrites and impostors, Victor and Clermont, were still in existence. In truth, they were far too interested and notorious villains to think of sparing the criminal law any trouble by honestly knocking one another's brains out, and in fact were on the best terms, for persons of their stamp. As fortune, too, would have it, M. Molinet, in retiring to the country, had settled not far from the place of their retreat, which they kept as secret as possible, no less from fear of Alson's return than from that of being brought to account for having deserted their military duties. They were likewise enabled, from this spot, to observe the proceedings of M. Molinet, their father-in-law, and to learn whether the affair had at all subsided.

The report of the fourth marriage acted like poison upon their jealous and revengeful feelings; and not venturing, from a sense of mutual safety, to wreak them upon each other, they swore to prevent any other person availing himself of any advantage which they had forfeited themselves. With this view they pitched upon a wily young mendicant, who in some degree resembled Alson, and who could assume any character, and, equipping him in the manner already stated, their base stratagem turned out completely successful.

About the period that Baron Marly forwarded a copy of his divorce to his father-in-law, the latter became aware of the species of imposture that had been practised upon him, owing to the recognition and the subsequent confession of the roguish mendicant himself. Still, he did not betray his employers, and M. Molinet, supposing *them* to be deceased, was now more at a loss than ever what to conjecture on the subject.

Adeline, on her part, seemed inclined to make no further adventures in the matrimonial lottery, while her father was more intent than ever upon finding a real and *bonâ fide* son-in-law. Suitors again began to make their appearance, and he allowed her no peace until she agreed to make a fresh choice, for the fifth time, in the person of the Marquis Gilles.

The marriage ceremony was fixed to take place at a country seat at some distance belonging to the new bridegroom. Everything appeared in a good train; the day, the dinner, and the dance were all happily concluded. M. Molinet had himself seen to the security of all the doors and windows, and given orders to admit no more guests after that hour, be they who they would.

The house was just beginning to settle to rest, when, horrible to relate! a cry of "fire" was heard, and the room next the bridal chamber was found to be in flames. The marquis ran downstairs half undressed, and disappeared through the front door. The fire was fortunately got under, but the bridegroom was no longer to be seen. What had befallen him no one knew; his destiny remained a secret; and all that could be gathered was, that some countrymen had beheld a carriage drive with great rapidity from the castle.

Two days of grievous anxiety elapsed, when a courier made his appearance with the following letter, and after its delivery instantly galloped away:

"MADAM,—Your bridals are surely bewitched, and some dragon guards the entrance of the bridal chamber. I am no St. George, and feel no inclination to run a tilt with the monster; very willingly making room for the sixth fool, as I am told, who takes a fancy for such an adventure. "GILLES."

M. Molinet tore this precious epistle in a great rage; then ordered his carriage to the door, and taking his daughter along with him, ordered them to drive quick towards Paris. He left a letter behind him for his son-in-law, summoning him to appear and answer for his conduct; but this he never did, and consequently the marraige was annulled. But, in the course of this affair, an aged advocate became so deeply smitten with Adeline's charms as to be quite unable to devote himself longer to his profession without his fair client's

consent and assistance. The lady, however, would certainly have refused it, had not her father, an old friend of the lawyer's, kindly stepped in to second the plea; and she was, at last, over-persuaded to yield her hand.

This time the ceremony was performed in as private a manner as possible. Only a few persons were aware that it was about to take place, and the domestics were in perfect ignorance of it until all was concluded. The supper-table had been removed, and the happy old bridegroom was just thinking of moving after it, when the waiter entered and announced—the Marquis Gilles!

What a thunderbolt of surprise for the whole party! M. Molinet alone had presence of mind to cry out, "Let the marquis go to the devil! tell him we have nothing to say to each other."

But the noble marquis was already in the room. "First, my dear father," he said, "do me the justice to hear my defence, and send me there afterwards. On the eventful night of my marriage I was seized by robbers in my own court, and kidnapped blindfolded into a carriage, which proceeded the whole night. When it stopped, I was conducted into a place up steps and down steps, until they took the bandage from my eyes,—of very little service to me, in a dark room, with iron door and windows. Here the villains compelled me, by dint of threatening my life, to indite that false and wicked epistle to my beloved Adeline, but which procured me better treatment, and perhaps saved my life. Shortly afterwards they promised to release me, which they only did, however, within these last few hours. Yesterday they again blindfolded me, brought me out of the labyrinth, and conveyed me in a carriage to this very neighbourhood. Bidding me alight in some fields, they said to me, 'That is your road to Paris: put your best foot foremost, and try to reach it before nightfall, for your young bride is celebrating her nuptials to-day with an old parliament advocate. So make haste, or you will have no chance of avoiding the honours that are in store for you.' They then directed me to this house; and, before I had time to recover from my astonishment, they dragged me out of the carriage, and drove me with bitter mocks and gibings from their presence."

"A fine romantic history," exclaimed the old advocate; "but, my lord marquis, who will bear witness to all this? Besides, if you could, what would that help you? Your former marriage with your present bride, sir, has been formally revoked, rescinded, cancelled and annulled."

"I know nothing of your quirks of law, and I should be a fool to contend with you; I will put it into the hands of some skillful expounder of justice like yourself. My present object in coming here is loudly to protest, once for all, against your presuming to usurp my place, for I neither can nor will listen to it."

"Good," replied the advocate; "and that you likewise shall not venture to sport upon my manor, marquis, I hereby appeal to the sovereign fount of justice, to his majesty the king."

"A most servile appeal," exclaimed the marquis.

"And moreover," continued the lawyer, "my wife shall be entrusted, as a sacred deposit, until the decision of the case, into the hands of her father. I

will soon get your bill of divorce confirmed."

The noble marquis expressed himself satisfied with these terms. Both the litigants then took leave of their father-in-law, and left his house in company with the other guests. The poor merchant, in the bitterness of his feelings, pronounced his malediction upon the whole tribe of suitors, sons-in-law, and husbands in the world. He had not the least idea, however, that two of them had set fire to the mansion of the third, and also abducted the unfortunate marquis from his bridal chamber. Such information would doubtless have driven him stark mad; for, hard as the case was, he had not the least idea that he was now the father of six sons-in-law, while his only daughter remained without a husband. Yet such a strange fatality had Fortune, in the variety of her vagaries, produced, though she spared the unlucky old gentleman the additional torment of hearing that so many of his sons were still alive. The two traitors, his second and third sons, instantly fled from the country, after the success of their last exploit, leaving the young marquis and the old decayed barrister to settle their differences as they pleased.

They forthwith proceeded to try the question of *e thoro et mensa,* as respected the rich old merchant's daughter; but the cause, from one reason or other, was protracted so long that the old advocate died before the conclusion, an event which was hailed with singular pleasure by the young marquis. Finding that the aged barrister was too impatient to await the result of the trial, the marquis, on his side, began to sue for a restoration of conjugal rights, but met with unexpected difficulties from the young lady no less than from her father. They refused to give credit to the story of his abduction, and declared that he had meant to insult the family, in order to afford grounds for future separation: as he had before pleased himself by taking French leave of them, he might this time take himself off again in order to please them.

The sighing shepherd, shocked at this reception, pleaded his perfect innocence of the charge, invoking all the saints to bear witness to the truth of his assertion. But the young lady was inexorable, declaring that she would rather die than think of receiving so ungallant a swain, who had once so basely deserted her.

So the marquis went to take the opinion of counsel; whose first question was, "whether he could procure any witness or witnesses to his forcible abduction?" He replied in the negative, and the lawyers shrugged up their shoulders, and advised him to think of proceeding no further with such a case in a legal form. The same opinion seemed to be entertained by all his lordship's friends. They attempted to impress upon him how unbecoming his dignity it was to sigh and languish for the daughter of a citizen, who rewarded him only with indifference and contempt. His pride took the alarm, and, shifting his affection for Adeline as well as he could, he disposed of his possessions in France, and set off in a great huff on a tour into Spain.

How must we account, however, for the surprising coolness and cruelty evinced towards him by Adeline, unless we believe her to have been quite of a heartless, jilting disposition, and the most variable of her sex? There was something, indeed, in this; but it must

at the same time be observed in her praise, that she had never been seriously attached to any of her six husbands, except the first, having yielded her hand more in compliance with her father's wishes, and a transitory feeling of regard, than from sentiments of esteem and love. Besides, in regard to the marquis, her recollections were soon effaced by the appearance of a rival, a very handsome young officer of hussars, which made her more anxious than before to break off her engagements with the former. On this occasion her father had less difficulty than on any of the preceding in persuading her to listen to the young man's vows, and she accepted him with the same dutiful sentiments as heretofore.

Previous to the ceremony, the good old merchant took his future son-in-law aside. "You are aware, my friend, that you are only following in the wake of six other lovers, who are most of them now deceased. Theirs has been a strange fate, and I imagine they must all have been bewitched. If you are bent upon running the same risk, and will not be advised to think better of it, there is one little piece of advice which I shall give you, and which may perhaps serve to counteract the charm. All manœuvres, you know, are lawful in love and war; and, after you come from church, I would have you never once lose sight of your bride until you have secured her for your own."

Adeline was conducted from the altar between her father and her seventh husband, and was just proceeding up the steps into the house. Suddenly hasty footsteps were heard behind them, and some one inquired for M. Molinet. Upon turning round, the bridal party beheld a pale, haggard young man, in an officer's faded uniform, who stood looking at them, supported upon a crutch.

"Who inquires for me?" said M. Molinet, trembling in every limb as he spoke: "who are you? what is your business with me?"

"I am an unfortunate being," murmured the stranger, "betrayed by false friends: don't you recognize me?"

"No, sir," said Molinet, as the wedded pair were hurrying him up the steps: "I know nobody now."

"What!" replied the stranger, "have my long sufferings so completely metamorphosed me? Are you too a stranger to me, Adeline? not recognized by my own wife! My first and only love, I am Alson!"

"Just Heavens!" cried the bride, "surely that voice——"

"Away with you!" exclaimed M. Molinet; "do not listen to him, girl! he is only an impostor. Take her away, my dear son-in-law, and follow my advice." At the same time M. Molinet pushed the young hussar and his daughter before him into the house.

The stranger here clapped his hand upon his sword, and confronting his rival, "Not a step farther, on your life, sir. Would you be guilty of eloping with my wife before my eyes?"

With enraged looks the hussar drew his broadsword; but Adeline arrested his arm. "No bloodshed," she cried, with entreating accents, "for that man is Alson. My first and best beloved! my eye indeed can scarcely recognize you, but my heart speaks the truth too feelingly—it is you. Yet I have already been so vilely deceived in this manner, that I am become suspicious of every one; I must, therefore, insist upon re-

ceiving still more positive proofs of your existence than your mere appearance will afford; nor deem it want of affection that dictates our separation until the period when these can be adduced. Believe me, I indulge not the least suspicion; but I owe thus much to my own character and to the world. When once I am happy enough to be pronounced yours, lawfully yours, I will most joyfully give you my hand, and live and die with you alone."

Adeline then retired weeping into her chamber; the young hussar left the place with a bitter curse; and M. Molinet, with his eyes fixed in mute and perplexed dismay upon the features of Alson, after some cogitating and talking with himself, at length reached out his hand, saying, "The longer I puzzle myself with your face and figure, the more I seem to recollect somebody very like you; but I think it must have been in some other world. Be that, however, as it may, you are heartily welcome, my boy; my poor son Alson—if you are Alson; and forgive me for giving you so rude a reception, and for having you sent, so soon after your marriage, abroad. I had no idea you would stay so long."

Alson, for in fact it was no one else, had no very great ordeal to undergo before he succeeded in establishing proofs of his identity. Wherever he appeared, the resemblance between him and his former self became more and more apparent, on slight examination.

The strange history of his capture, and his subsequent adventures and final release, were reserved for the ear of Adeline, and would, perhaps, appear tedious to any one else. By her he was received with unaffected tenderness, and they had the pleasure of being twice married to each other, the old gentleman insisting upon a repetition of the ceremony after so long an absence; and it was the only real marriage out of seven, or rather eight.

They were now truly happy and blessed with each other's society; and, had not the poor broken-down soldier died about a month after the ceremony, their happiness might have continued much longer. Adeline lamented him with true widow's tears; yet, after wearing her weeds awhile, being of a somewhat volatile and easy temper, suffered the handsome young hussar to come and wipe away her tears.

She consented to become his, as usual, at her father's request; and she was too sweet-tempered and gentle long to have resisted the request of any one who bespoke her kindly. They lived very happily together,—though she had wed seven husbands in about the space of six years,—and she spent about half a century with her last consort.

Passion of an Emperor

Otto, the third emperor of that name, on his return from Rome, where he had just been invested with the imperial dignity by the reigning pontiff, Gregory V., touched at Florence on his way to his German dominions. The whole of Tuscany, then under the imperial sway, was committed to the government of Ugone, Marquis of Brandenburg, cousin-german to the emperor, a man of ap-

proved reputation, and esteemed for his love of justice by all ranks of people. Now it happened during the emperor's stay that the festival of San Giovanni the Baptist, the tutelary saint of Florence, was everywhere celebrated throughout the city, and the concourse of guests at the palace was likewise very great.

Among these, the emperor was particularly struck with a beautiful young lady, daughter to a gentleman of the name of Berti dei Ravignani. She was esteemed the most lovely and accomplished maiden, not only in Florence, but throughout all Tuscany. The eyes of the company were frequently riveted upon her, and those of the emperor never once wandered from her face. Such was the impression he received, that, unable to detect the least fault in her face or form, and charmed with the sweetness of her manners, he gave way to the most unbounded admiration, in spite of the restraints imposed upon him by his birth and station. The more he gazed, and the more he conversed with her, the deeper sunk the emotions he began to entertain, until, at the close of the festival, on taking his leave of her, he returned to his own palace silent and unhappy, his whole soul absorbed in the recollection of the exquisite charms, both of mind and person, of the lady he had just seen.

Such influence over him did this passion at length assume, that so far from being able to extirpate it, he could no longer disguise his feelings; and doubtful only in what manner to proceed, he resolved to consult one of the most prudent gentlemen of his bedchamber. To him he committed the task of obtaining further particulars concerning the beloved object, giving him at the same time proper instructions by which he might discover her. In this manner he shortly became acquainted with her father's name and the whole genealogy of her family. The gentleman was of good extraction, but in somewhat confined circumstances, and by no means of a disposition, either by his industry or his wit, to improve them.

Scorning the idea of acting in any way either artfully or dishonorably, yet being determined to pursue his object, the emperor resolved to hint the affair to the lady's father through his confidant, and proceed throughout the whole transaction. both with regard to the father and the daughter, candidly and openly. With this view, having learned that his mission to Messer Berti, owing to the expectations of wealth and influence which it excited in his mind, had met with a favorable reception, the emperor invited him to his royal table; and lavishing upon him every mark of attention, soon entered into familiar discourse, though without alluding, in the most distant manner, to the subject nearest his heart. Such marks of favor would have been quite sufficient to dazzle the judgment and warp the virtuous feelings of a wiser and better man than poor Berti dei Ravignani; and so elevated was he with these sudden glimpses of court favor, that he could not forbear boasting of them, on his return home, to his daughter. He soon afterwards announced, with a very consequential air, that he intended to invite the emperor and a few friends to dinner; that he was already extremely well disposed towards him; that she must take care to put on her best looks, and

it was impossible to say to what height of fortune they might not aspire.

Intelligent and virtuous as she was beautiful, the fair Gualdrada on hearing these words, though some suspicions flashed across her mind, disdained to notice them, being determined to rely upon himself and to act as circumstances might require. On the appointed day, therefore, the emperor attended, with a single gentleman, the summons of Messer Berti to feast with him at his house, where he had the pleasure of being introduced into the society of the beautiful object of all his hopes. Here, while attempting to make himself as agreeable as possible, the emperor had occasion to observe the nobleness and simplicity of her mind and sentiments, no less than her surpassing beauty and the artless graces of her person.

And however desirous of disguising the warmth of his feelings from motives of delicacy, heightened by the high opinion which he began to entertain of her, he nevertheless could not refrain from availing himself of an opportunity of avowing his sentiments, declaring that he had struggled long and painfully with them, and that he could not help telling her so, however fearful he might be of incurring her displeasure. He trusted she would consider that in all countries and all ages, the most cautious as well as the most lofty of human characters had at some period of their lives experienced the same irresistible sentiments which now impelled him, against his better feelings and judgment, to admire, and to avow his admiration and his passion; a passion which, however unjust and ungenerous it was, in vain he attempted to suppress. He urged that so many illustrious instances, both in Greek and Roman history, would in some measure plead his excuse; the Cæsars, the Hannibals, the Massinissas, the Antonys; the last of whom he verily believed had no apology to offer for his weakness at all equal to that which stood arrayed in superior charms before him.

"And if you deign not now to listen to me," continued the emperor, as he threw himself at the lady's feet, "I feel that my scepter and my diadem, with all their pomp, are worthless in my eyes. Take them, or take at least more than they are worth—the heart that is above them all."

A variety of emotions chased each other over the features of the fair girl as she listened to the words of the emperor; gratified pride and vanity, terror, shame, and doubt, were all there; but these were again overpowered and absorbed in the more overwhelming sense of love—a love which, although she ventured not to avow it, clung to another object. Releasing her hand, therefore, from that of the emperor, she made no reply, but turning away, burst into tears. Her royal lover, nearly as much distressed as herself, now entreated her forgiveness, accusing himself of the greatest thoughtlessness and cruelty in having thus inconsiderately tried her feelings. In the most soothing and respectful terms he entreated her to compose her mind, and fully to rely upon his humanity and honor. As there appeared to be some degree of mystery in her manner of receiving him, he said that he should feel highly gratified to be considered worthy of her confidence, however painful the sacrifice he might have to make in conse-

quence, if indeed she could never return his love.

Expressing her gratitude for these assurances of kindness and respect, the fair Gualdrada, fearful of offending the emperor in the avowal she was preparing to make, fell at his feet and besought him to forgive her temerity in venturing to refuse his love. She then confessed that on the same night of the festival in which she had been presented to his imperial highness, Guido, a young cavalier of his court, had also seen and sought her love; that they had since had several interviews, but that neither of them possessing wealth, she had not ventured to make known his offer to her father. Without a moment's hesitation, the emperor, thanking her for this proof of confidence, and recovering all his former generosity and magnanimity of feeling, instantly despatched orders to the young cavalier to attend him. On his arrival, presenting the astonished soldier to the weeping and blushing Gualdrada, he observed with his usual mildness:

"It is my pleasure, Guido, that you should espouse this lady, the daughter of a noble though impoverished house."

The next day, holding a splendid festival in honor of their nuptials, he himself presented the hand of the fair Gualdrada to his favorite Guido, and conferred upon him a handsome fortune.

Lost Words of Love

Once upon a time a very cruel fairy, pretty as the flowers, but wicked as the serpents who hide in the grass ready to spring upon you, resolved to avenge herself upon all the people of a great country. Where was this country? On the mountain or in the plain, at the shore of the river or by the sea? This the story does not tell. Perhaps it was near the kingdom where the dressmakers were very skilful in adorning princesses' robes with moons and with stars. And what the offence under which the fairy smarted? On this point also the story is silent. Perhaps they had omitted to offer up prayers to her at the baptism of the king's daughter. Be this as it may, it is certain that the fairy was in a great rage.

At first she asked herself whether she should devastate the country by sending out the thousands of spirits that served her to set fire to all the palaces and all the cottages; or whether she should cause all the lilacs and all the roses to fade; or whether she should turn all the young girls into ugly old women. She could have let loose all the four winds in the streets and laid low all the houses and trees. At her command fire-spitting mountains would have buried the entire land under a mass of burning lava, and the sun would have turned from his path so as not to shine upon the accursed city. But she did still worse. Like a thief leisurely choosing the most precious jewels in a case, she removed from the memory of men and women the three divine words:

"I love you."

And having wrought this affliction, she removed herself with a smile that

would have been more hideous than the church of the devil had she not had the most beautiful rosy lips in all creation.

At first the men and women only half perceived the wrong that had been done them. They felt they lacked something, but did not know what. The sweethearts who met in the eglantine lanes, the married couples who talked confidingly to each other behind closed windows and drawn curtains, suddenly interrupted themselves and looked at each other or embraced. They felt, indeed, the desire to utter a certain customary phrase, but they had no idea even of what that phrase was. They were astonished, uneasy, but they asked no question, for they knew not what question to ask, so complete was their forgetfulness of the precious word. As yet, however, their suffering was not very great. They had so many other words they could whisper to each other, so many forms of endearment.

Alas! It was not long before they were seized with a profound melancholy. In vain did they adore each other, in vain did they call each other by the tenderest names and speak the sweetest language. It was not enough to declare that all the bliss lay in their kisses; to swear that they were ready to die, he for her and she for him; to call each other: "My soul; My flame! My dream!" They instinctively felt the need of saying and hearing another word, more exquisite than all other words; and with the bitter memory of the ecstasy contained in this word came the anguish of never again being able to utter or to hear it.

Quarrels followed in the wake of this distress. Judging his happiness incomplete on account of the avowal that was henceforth denied to the most ardent lips, the lover demanded from her and she from him the very thing that neither the one nor the other could give, without either knowing what that thing was, nor being able to name it. They accused each other of coldness, of perfidy, not believing in the tenderness which was not expressed as they desired it should be.

Thus the sweethearts soon ceased to have their rendezvous in the lanes where the eglantines grew, and even after the windows were closed the conjugal chambers echoed only with dry conversations from easy-chairs that were never drawn close to each other. Can there be joy without love? If the country which had incurred the hatred of the fairy had been ruined by war, or devastated by pestilence, it could not have been as desolate, as mournful, as forlorn as it had become on account of the three forgotten words.

There lived in this country a poet whose plight was even more pitiful than the plight of all the rest. It was not that having a beautiful sweetheart he was in despair at not being able to say and to hear the stolen word. He had no sweetheart. He was too much in love with the muse. It was because he was unable to finish a poem he had begun the day before the wicked fairy had accomplished her vengeance. And why? Because it just happened that the poem was to wind up with "I love you" and it was impossible to end it in any other way.

The poet struck his brow, took his head between his hands, and asked himself: "Have I gone mad?" He was

certain he had found the words that were to precede the last point of exclamation before he had commenced to write the stanza. The proof that he had found them was that the rhyme with which it was to go was already written. There it was—it waited for them, nay, called aloud for them; it wanted no others, waiting for them like lips waiting for sister lips to kiss them. And this indispensable, fatal phrase he had forgotten; he could not even recall that he had ever known it. Surely there was some mystery in this, the poet mused unceasingly and with bitter melancholy—oh, the pang of interrupted poems!—as he sat at the edge of the forest near the limpid fountains where the fairies are wont to dance of an evening by starlight.

Now as he sat one morning under the branches of a tree, the wicked, thieving fairy saw him and loved him. One is not a fairy for nothing; a fairy does not stand on ceremony. Swifter than a butterfly kisses a rose she put her lips on his lips, and the poet, greatly preoccupied though he was with his ode, could not help but feel the heavenliness of her caress. Blue and rose diamond grottos opened up in the depths of the earth, luminous as the stars. Thither the poet and the fairy were drawn in a chariot of gold by winged steeds who left the earth in their flight. And for a long, long time they loved each other, forgetful of all but their kisses and smiles. If they ceased for a moment to have their mouths united and to look into each other's eyes, it was but to take pleasure in more amiable diversions. Gnomes dressed in violet satin, elves attired in a misty haze, performed dances before them that fell in rhythm with the music of unseen orchestras while flitting hands that had no arms brought them ruby baskets of snow-white fruit, perfumed like a white rose and like a virgin bosom. Or, to please the fairy more, the poet recited, while striking the chords of a therobo, the most beautiful verses his fancy could conceive.

Fairy that she was, she had never known joy comparable to this of being sung by a beautiful young man who invented new songs every day. And when he grew silent, and she felt the breath of his mouth near her, felt it passing through her hair, she melted away in tenderness.

Their happiness seemed without end. Days passed by, many, many days, but nothing occurred to disturb their joy. And yet she had moments of gloom, when she would sit musing, with her cheek on her hand and her hair falling in streams down to her hips.

"O queen!" he cried, "what is it that makes you sad; what more can you desire, seeing that we are so happy in the midst of all our pleasures, you who are all powerful, you who are so beautiful?"

At first she made no answer, but when he insisted, she sighed and said: "Alas! one always ends by suffering the evil that one has inflicted on others. Alas! I am sad because you have never told me: 'I love you.' "

He did not pronounce the words, but uttered a cry of joy at having found again the end of his poem. In vain the fairy attempted to retain him in the blue and rose-diamond grottos, in the gardens of lilies that were as luminous as the stars. He returned to earth,

completed, wrote and published his ode, in which the men and women of the afflicted country found again the divine words they had lost.

Now there were rendezvous again in the lanes, and warm, amorous conversations at the conjugal windows.

It is because of poetry that kisses are sweet, and lovers say nothing that the poets have not sung.

Madam, the Duchess

"Did Madam the Duchess ring?"

"Dismiss the carriage. Take these flowers away. I am not at home to anyone, do you understand?"

And as the butler bent his head in response to these orders, uttered in quick, excited tones, the Duchess of Neli let herself fall back again upon the sofa.

The lowered shades allowed scant light to enter, and the whole room gave an impression of profound seclusion. Velvety carpets and heavy hangings isolated still more this remote boudoir, where the duchess by preference passed her time, reading or working, and where she now abandoned herself to her thoughts, with her hands over her face, while Bourget's last novel revealed a tortoise-shell paper-cutter thrust between its pages; and a silken thread, trailing from a work-basket, disappeared beneath a footstool, still testifying to the perturbed gesture which had sent the spool rolling away from the embroidery.

After long meditation, the lady roused herself, rose to her feet, and crossed the room towards the mirror. Pausing before it, she leaned her head forward, and then drew back again. Apparently she was tempted to look at herself, yet was restrained by the fear of beholding an unwelcome sight. Now she rested her elbow on the mantel-shelf, and with her forefinger between her lips, slowly bit the nail, while the point of her shoe beat a nervous tattoo upon the floor. Once again she tore herself from her thoughts, approached the window, and flung it open, after raising the shade. In the clear light, which inundated the blue-tinted boudoir, she turned back, this time resolutely, to the mirror, and remained before it a long time, studying herself.

There was no longer even the possibility of a doubt. Her hair was turning white, upon the temples and forehead, where there was the least opportunity of hiding it! In the beginning, several years ago, the discovery of a few threads of silver had aroused in her the first melancholy foreshadowings of life's approaching sunset; but she had at once set herself to hunt them down, pulling them out by the roots with scrupulous care, not overlooking a single one. For a while they had not reappeared. Then timidly, secretly, hidden beneath the thick and jet-black tresses, the white threads had sprung up once more; but so few, so scattered, that, actually, she had not noticed them. Had not the Marquis of Crollanza resorted to hair-dye at thirty-eight? And was not little Annina Fiorelli, at the age of eighteen—a mere baby!—already almost gray?

What wonder, then, if at her age a few threads of silver were interwoven among her raven tresses? Nevertheless, since that time she had no longer looked at herself attentively, as had once been her habit; while her maid brushed her hair, she would turn her glance elsewhere; an instinctive movement spared her the sight of those signs which announced the approaching end of her personal beauty. And suddenly to-day, inadvertently approaching the accusing mirror, she had discovered whole lumps of white hair intermingled with the gleaming ebony of her tresses!

There was no longer the possibility of a doubt; not even an illusion was permitted her; and yet she had not learned to resign herself to the sad discovery. With a nervous gesture she raised her hands to her head, flung aside comb and hairpins, and began to take down rapidly the skilful edifice of her coiffure. First, the two heavy strands of black hair fell, scattering over her shoulders; then those from above her temples veiled her face. Seen like this, from a little distance, in copious masses, her hair was even yet marvelously beautiful. It was necessary to come quite close to the mirror, to take up the separate locks in her hands, to divide them, to spread them out, before the disfiguring threads could be perceived. But how many of them there were! How many! How was it that she had not been aware of them until now? And at every new clump that she discovered, a hot flush overspread her face. She wanted to close her eyes, to escape from the painful sight; but she seemed to lack the power, and stood there fascinated, hypnotized, with wide, staring eyes and fixed gaze.

She was growing old! Fatally, inexorably, the flower of her beauty was drooping, withering, dying. Today her hair was turning white; tomorrow wrinkles would furrow the marble of her brow, the velvet of her cheeks; next the ivory white of her teeth would perish, and she would lose them, one by one. She had reached the end. Her woman's empire was nearly over, closing, as it had begun; fruitlessly.—

"Fruitlessly!"

This word, pronounced in accents of profound bitterness, died away in the silence of the boudoir. The Duchess of Neli tore herself from before the mirror and, twisting up her hair as best she could, flung herself down once more upon the sofa. And now all her past life, the monotonous and empty life of a woman above reproach, unrolled itself before her. Better so, she said to herself, better old age; better loss of beauty, since beauty and youth had availed her nothing, nothing at all; better that her hair should whiten; perhaps some man might now take notice of it and speak of it to her.

What profit had she ever had from her complexion, as fair as the pulp of ripe fruit; from her somewhat large, vermilion, fragrant mouth; from her aristocratically slender hands, with their long, tapering fingers; from her arms that were at once strong and delicate; from her slender, stately figure, full of grace? What profit had she ever had from any of these things, since no one had ever loved her, no one ever would love her? Was it her duty to preserve her beauty for the sake of her husband, that personification of selfishness, the man who procured her all the pangs of jealousy, with none of the compensa-

tions of love? It was ten years since she had begun serving her sentence; ten years, during which a chorus of praise and admiration had been raised around her.

Much she had gained by being above reproach! With how much gratitude had her husband repaid her, when his adventures formed the gossip of their world and overwhelmed her with ridicule? In short, this useless irreproachability had become a burden to her. The voice of rebellion rose to her lips. She had served ten years of her sentence, but her own years already numbered thirty-five! Thirty-five, neither more nor less; why should she hide them any longer? Did she not carry it plainly written upon her, in those white hairs that before long would gain the upper hand? And at the age of thirty-five she was still reduced to building air-castles, as at the age of fifteen. At the time when other women were beginning to live upon their memories, she was condemned to subsist upon hopes, hopes that every day grew more chimerical, hopes of which she herself would very soon be forced to recognize the immense folly!

Once again the Duchess of Neli roused herself from her meditations and raised her head. The chamber was already nearly dark. She rose and went to the window. The day was overcast; big, grayish clouds were racing past, spurred on by a wind that was shaking the withered leaves from the trees along the avenue, and scattering them in whirling eddies all around. Not a carriage, not a single passer-by. The leaden gray of the autumnal sky seemed to weigh upon the earth oppressively, hampering the breath of every living creature.

"Better as it is," she said again, contemplating the lowering sky, the restricted circle of the horizon, the half denuded trees, and finding a dolorous accord between the melancholy of nature at this season of the year, and the mood of her own spirit. It was autumn which henceforth would suit her best, autumn in the country, where one sees far more clearly the lack of verdure, the withdrawal of the sun, all the symptoms of the agony of nature.

And while she realized her wisdom in having given orders to take away the bouquet which her gardener had sent her, the butler appeared once more upon the threshold.

"Madam the Duchess is served."

Passing into the dining room, and taking her place at the table, where the duke was beating time with knife and fork, turning up his nose at everything and craning his neck first one way and then the other, like an ill bred school boy, the duchess announced in curt tones:

"Tomorrow I am going to our villa."

Her husband stared at her, amazed at her unaccustomed tone of decision. But an expression of satisfaction suddenly overspread his features.

"Why, that was precisely——" then, as if thinking better of it, "This is not a good time of year. Still, do just as you please. You can give the necessary orders."

Nothing so encourages the mood for indulging in day dreams and lingering memories of the distant past as certain gray days in October, when the clouds flit past in procession, one after another.

confused and nevertheless distinct, in the same manner as the images of bygone happenings. One after another, recollections pass across the sky of memory; and, whether joyous or gloomy, they are always pervaded with an intimate melancholy, perhaps the effect of that inaction to which the living energies of our being have succumbed.

In some such state of mind, Guido Olderico found his way to the esplanade in front of the monastery of St. Francis, on the brow of a precipitous slope, from which the eye commanded a view of the immense green valley, dotted over with villas and peasants' huts, which, from that distance, took on the appearance of toy houses scattered at random, by the irresponsible hand of a capricious child. The sky was overcast, but the air was mild, and the foliage of the endless vineyards was still green. From time to time the sound of a bell striking the hour was borne upward from some village clock tower. Cocks were crowing in the distance. No other sound disturbed the peace of that solitude. Seated upon a stone, with elbows resting upon the balustrade that surrounded the entire esplanade, Olderico looked not unlike a statue, such as that of St. Francis himself extending a benediction from above the coping of the little chapel. Amid the peace of this rural scene he felt at last that the agitation of his harassed nerves was abating; and, from this distance, the turbulent life of the city, the complacent search for subtle and acute sensations, seemed to him paltry and unworthy. Winter was approaching; the years were gliding by, and he realized that the time would very soon arrive when the renunciation of his present mode of life would no longer be a meritorious act. In this frame of mind, the slow passage of autumn in the country caused him no particular anguish; while on the contrary, in former years, the gradual daily shortening of the sunbeams along the wall of his sitting room caused a curious tightening sensation at his heart, notwithstanding the thousand distractions of city life.

"September sun that lingerest in the sky
Like one who sees his better years pass by,
Yet gazes sadly forward; thy soft rays
Thou stretchest towards the gloom of wintry days."

Olderico repeated to himself these verses of Carducci, but no longer with the mute anguish of former times, although with a sort of commiseration for all this nature that was destined so soon to perish, for all the living creatures which death awaited and for himself besides.

Suddenly there came the sound of footsteps upon the gravel of the path. As Olderico turned, he saw two ladies approaching across the esplanade.

"Marquise! You up here?"

"Oh, it is you, Olderico! What good luck! You will keep us company through the horrors of this dungeon, won't you? We are going to turn monks, like Eleanora in the *Force of Destiny*. Aren't you acquainted? Sir Guido Olderico—the Duchess of Neli Valformio.—Which way do we go, to get into the monastery?"

"This way, if I may show you."

Olderico gave his right arm to the

duchess, who accordingly remained in the middle. She wore a suit of gray cloth, extremely simple; gray gloves, and a turban hat, also of gray; not a jewel, neither earrings nor bracelets; nothing but a horseshoe pin that held together a rather high collar, which gave her an almost masculine air.

"If these good friars," said the Marquise of Crollanza, "would tell me a lucky number, I would feel perfectly satisfied with today's excursion. Not to speak of our meeting with you, Olderico, which also makes a lucky number! You would play the lottery, too, if the friars gave up a lucky number, wouldn't you? I should love to win a nice little million——"

The duchess was gazing off at the surrounding landscape, absent mindedly, as though rather bored by this purposeless chatter.

"I was just talking with Enrichetta about what we should do, if we found a nice little million, in a big package of bank notes, on the ground in the middle of the street. For my part, to tell you the truth, I should be simply overjoyed; and I should pocket it! Wouldn't you be overjoyed yourself?"

"Not especially! I should hand it over to the police, and take out my reward in newspaper eulogies!"

But, while he laughed with the marquise, he kept his eyes upon her companion, who remained unsmiling, almost sad. After he had knocked at the main door, the face of one of the brothers, with a bristling black beard, appeared at the little window.

"Are visitors allowed in the monastery?"

The head vanished, and the big door was opened half way. First of all, the Duchess of Neli entered resolutely. The marquise hesitated, cast a glance around, and looked up at Olderico, as if to gain courage. At last she gathered up her skirts of *peluche mousse,* with its broad bands of rich embroidery, slightly bent her head, on which she wore a broad-brimmed hat of olive felt with a rich garnishing of *mousse* plumes falling in a cascade over one side, and made up her mind to follow her friend.

In the courtyard the dry leaves from the chestnut trees had formed a thick carpeting, over which the women's gowns rustled as they passed. The brother, with stooping shoulders, a rosary pendent from his leathern girdle, his bare feet thrust into wooden sandals, led the way in silence. When they reached the stairs, the marquise's fears redoubled. Her friend had already vanished from sight before she had mounted a single step. Her gay chatter had ceased.

"What an idea of Enrichetta's, to come poking her nose into a place like this! Olderico, do keep close beside me!"

While they ascended the stairs, she paused every now and then, and turned back to assure herself that he was still there. In her alarm she had become doubly alluring; and yet the sound of the duchess's footsteps drew the young man's thoughts elsewhere.

At the head of the stairs, a long, narrow corridor, with low vaulted ceiling, dimly lighted by a window opening at the further extremity, showed a double line of doors, old and worm-eaten, each one bearing a number. The duchess went steadily forward beside the brother, who narrated to her in low tones the miracles of St. Francis, his eyes bent

upon the ground, pausing every now and then, to point out with his bony, calloused hand some dust-covered little painting, in which one distinguished with difficulty a ship in the midst of a tempest, or bleeding martyrs, with a little image, in one corner, of the saint surrounded with clouds.

The marquise advanced slowly, casting apprehensive glances around her, and keeping close to the side of Olderico. As they reached a crossway, formed by another corridor which cut the first at right angles, they suddenly heard a muffled sound, almost like a death rattle.

"Olderico! Give me your arm!" and she clung to him desperately.

It was only a clock, which from some hidden spot was slowly striking the hour. When the sound ceased a door opened in the distance, and a long file of friars passed, with bowed heads, murmuring incomprehensible prayers.

"I am frightened!" the marquise confided to her companion, "do take me away."

Olderico felt the close pressure of her form against his side; but what surprised him was his own indifference to her attractions. His eyes still followed the figure of the duchess as she went serenely on, bowing her head and making the sign of the cross before the sacred images.

They had now reached the end of the corridor. As the brother opened the window, Olderico exclaimed:

"See, what a beautiful view!"

But the marquise, following the glance of her companion, had discovered the real object of his attention. Thereupon she brusquely dropped his arm.

"Marvelous, indeed!" she exclaimed, with a slight intonation of mocking irony.

The panorama was most beautiful, and vastly more extended than from the esplanade, from which the slope of the mountains, covered with woods at the base and with snow above, could not be seen.

In the presence of this majestic view the Duchess of Neli remained silent. A veil of melancholy seemed to fall over her face, and an expression of weariness was apparent in her entire person.

As Guido Olderico found himself standing close to her, face to face, he suddenly observed that her front hair was thickly intermingled with threads of white.

"Will he come? Or won't he?"

Walking rapidly back and forth, from one end to the other of the terrace before her villa, the Duchess of Neli repeated this question to herself for the hundredth time since her meeting with Olderico. She could still see the aristocratic figure of the young man; his easy, polished gestures; she could still hear the sound of his voice, when on their way back from the monastery, seated in the marquise's landau, they had entered upon a discussion of art literature, in which he had expressed opinions and revealed tastes that were at once delicate and profound. He had furthermore promised to send the ladies certain books, and the duchess had seized upon this as a means of continuing the acquaintance. Now she repented that she had not distinctly given him to understand that his companionship was most agreeable to her and that she would look forward with pleasure to receiving him in her own home. How

cold she had been to him, how stiff, how antipathetic! She certainly must have produced an effect of invincible repulsion! Besides, she had been so badly dressed! That poor old gray suit! That last year's turban!—And she had not smiled a single time, she had not opened her lips far enough for him to see, in the absence of all her jewelry, at least the pearly whiteness of her teeth.

"Will he come? Or won't he?"

Notwithstanding her fears and her regrets, the duchess still retained some hope. In the loneliness of this remote countryside, Olderico would probably seize with eagerness the chance to form a new acquaintance. Besides—besides—thirty-five years old, it was true; a good many white hairs, but in all conscience the duchess believed she was a hundred times more desirable than that poor Marquise of Crollanza, who was already squandering all her coquetries in vain! She felt, however, at the same time, that she herself had little to expect from the future, and that she must come to a decision. As it happened, the duke's rigid surveillance had relaxed. Her husband left her alone for long days at a time, while he returned to the city, lured thither by some new infatuation which was the common talk of the hour. He no longer regarded her as dangerous! His jealousy was waning, because he no longer believed that she was desirable. He once told her so, with the cruel humor of a spoiled child. So, she was old, was she? Her hair was turning white, was it? Well, she would show him whether all the world judged her by his standard!

She had reached the point where she could bear no more; she felt that she lacked the strength to prolong this endless, useless sacrifice. Her scruples had been ridiculous, after all! Everyone, from first to last, would have said she had abundant cause for throwing her scruples aside! Was it a crime for a woman to claim her fair share of happiness, to ask for a little love? And, one by one, there passed before her fancy the faces of men whom she had met at ball or theater, of whom she had afterwards thought in secret, during wakeful hours, or amid the empty small talk of a duty call, or in church when, with eyes fixed upon her prayerbook, she failed to grasp the sense of what she read. Again and again, chance, scruples, misunderstanding, her husband's jealousy, had cut the romance short at the first chapter. Never could she live romances; she was fated only to read them! But all at once the hour had struck for squaring accounts! She had decided this time not to let the unexpected opportunity escape. And as for duty? As if she did not know that the great emotions of love, the spell of one of those passions that the whole world envies, could not be experienced without the sacrifice of something!

The duchess's fancy ran on and on; already she had built the structure of the whole adventure. It was all so easy, here in the country, with her husband so far off; and the illusion was so vivid that she already felt remorse for a fault that as yet existed only in her thoughts. Then, for punishment, she mocked herself, she made jests at her own expense for building castles on the foundation of a mere introduction, the most commonplace occurrence, of which she could recall a thousand instances.

"Will he come or won't he?"

She had come to the country without

giving a thought to the means of making herself attractive. She had brought nothing with her; not a single gown appropriate either for making or receiving visits: not a jewel or a bottle of perfumery; nothing, absolutely nothing beyond this miserable old gray dress! Little by little her promenade, or rather her breathless race up and down the terrace, moderated. She was now pacing slowly with her hands behind her back and her head bent slightly forward. All of a sudden she entered the house and, seated before her writing desk, began to note down upon a sheet of paper a list of the articles she needed. Interrupting herself, from time to time, she gazed off into space, nibbling the top of her penholder and murmuring:

"Will he come? Or won't he?"

As he came in sight of the villa, Guido Olderico slackened his horse's speed. Seen from a distance, where it nestled on the curved breast of a circular hill, and surrounded by a grove of pine and chestnuts, the ducal villa presented an exceedingly picturesque aspect, with its pavilions, turrets, and pointed roofs.

As the horse proceeded at a walk, prancing and champing its bit, Olderico sought to evoke from the physiognomy of the surroundings some revealed sign of the welcome that was awaiting him. Without being fatuous, he was aware that the duchess must regard him as something more than a casual acquaintance; and yet he was not wholly free from a certain disquietude. The impression produced upon him by this woman was far from ordinary. He had previously heard a great deal about her, the austerity of her conduct, the sacrifices of her whole life; and he could not prevent himself, every time that he had caught a glimpse of her or had called her to his mind, from feeling a certain instinctive curiosity about a person whom everyone, friends and enemies alike, agreed in pronouncing beyond parallel. But on the day of his visit to the hermitage a light had suddenly broken in upon him. What other cause could there be for the sadness so plainly stamped upon the Duchess of Neli's face than the emptiness of her life and of her heart? He could still see her, with her air of melancholy, in the almost humble simplicity of her garb, moving through the corridors of the hermitage, and it seemed to him that a secret harmony existed between such a woman, whose life had been renunciation, and the abode of those who had taken leave of the world forever. He could still see her, under the gray of the autumnal sky, upon the terrace before the holy dwelling, and he found himself unable to check his feelings of commiseration at the thought of those poor white hairs, that sunset of a beauty which had blossomed in vain. With what tender, and at the same time enduring love that woman must be capable of loving! What treasures of affection she must have stored up in a heart which for so long had been a desert! How he would like to give her, in the brief years that still remained before her, all the happiness of which she had been defrauded! How he wished that the dawn of love might shed its consolation on the melancholy of her sunset! With what tenderness he would kiss those poor white hairs, with what jealous care he would gather and guard a lock of them!

All at once the horse came to a halt.

The intelligent animal seemed to understand his rider's preoccupation and to have discovered the goal, since he had stopped of his own accord before the gate of the villa. Olderico dismounted, fastened the reins to the post, and advanced along the drive. Two dogs ran, barking, to meet him, and a servant came forward.

"Is the duchess at home?"

"Will you please enter?"

Olderico ascended the few marble steps, ornamented with great vases. At the entrance a butler ushered him in. They passed through a succession of dimly lighted rooms, where their steps were deadened by heavy carpetings. The lady was waiting in a small reception room, which was darker still. Coming in, Olderico had not perceived her; as she roused herself from her easy chair, he came forward.

"Duchess——"

"Good afternoon; you have been very good not to forget me! I am so glad of the chance to thank you personally for those charming books. They were really a great treat! The time drags so, in the country, at this hateful time of year! But, thanks to you, I have passed some most delightful hours."

"Allow me to believe that it is I who owe thanks——"

His eyes having grown accustomed to the dubious light, Olderico could see the duchess more distinctly. She wore a rich tea gown of faun color, with wide panels of shirred surah, of the palest sky blue, trimmed with lace and cascades of ribbon, also blue and faun. Her whole person exhaled a perfume of corylopsis, so acute as almost to make one feel faint.

Without well knowing why, Olderico felt himself overcome by a growing coldness. He was expecting to find the lady he had met in the monastery; and instead he had before him a different woman. While the duchess spoke of the tediousness of autumn, the prospective pleasures of winter, he agreed with her, reluctantly, and purely for the sake of saying something.

"Here is your *Mont-Oriol;* I am just finishing it."

The duchess took the volume from a low stand beside her and half extended her arm. Her fingers were laden with rings, and the brilliants flashed their gleams in all directions.

She began to talk of literature; she had a grudge against the naturalists, holding that they were wrong in not describing rich surroundings, fashionable life, noble and generous passions. Olderico, more and more out of sympathy, scarcely answered her.

The duchess rose.

"Do you ever indulge in bonbons?"

"Thank you, yes, duchess."

As she took the bonbon tray from the mantel-shelf beside the window, and Olderico came nearer to her, he saw her forehead in full daylight. The white hairs? Departed! vanished! In their stead the skin was imperceptibly stained with black.

"Do you remain some time longer in the country?"

"Oh, no, madam. It seems to me that you are absolutely right. This autumn season is quite lacking in poetry. I return to town day after tomorrow."

Seduction

In the month of May of the year 1816, I happened to be traveling through the Government of N——, upon a road now destroyed. I then held an inferior rank, and traveled by post stages, paying the fare for two horses. As a consequence, the postmasters treated me with little ceremony, and I often had to take by force what, in my opinion, belonged to me by right. Being young and passionate, I was indignant at the baseness and cowardice of the postmaster, when the latter harnessed to the calèche of some official noble, the horses prepared for me. It was a long time, too, before I could get accustomed to being served out of my turn by a discriminating servant at the governor's dinner. Today the one and the other seem to me to be in the natural order of things. Indeed, what would become of us, if, instead of the generally observed rule: "Let rank honor rank," another were to be brought into use, as for example: "Let mind honor mind?" What disputes would arise! And with whom would the servants begin in serving the dishes? But to return to my story.

The day was hot. About three versts from A——, a drizzling rain came on, and in a few minutes it began to pour down in torrents and I was drenched to the skin. On arriving at the station, my first care was to change my clothes as quickly as possible, my second to ask for some tea.

"Hi! Dounia!" cried the postmaster: "prepare the tea-urn and go and get some cream."

At these words, a young girl of about fourteen years of age appeared from behind the partition, and ran out into the vestibule. Her beauty struck me.

"Is that your daughter?" I inquired of the Postmaster.

"That is my daughter," he replied, with a look of gratified pride; "and she is so sharp and sensible, just like her late mother."

Then he began to register my traveling passport, and I occupied myself with examining the pictures that adorned his humble abode. They illustrated the story of the Prodigal Son. In the first, a venerable old man, in a night-cap and dressing-gown, is taking leave of the restless youth, who is eagerly accepting his blessing and a bag of money. In the next picture, the dissipated life of the young man is depicted in vivid colors: he is represented sitting at a table surrounded by false friends and shameless women. Further on, the ruined youth, in rags and a three-cornered hat, is tending swine and sharing with them their food: on his face is expressed deep grief and repentance. The last picture represented his return to his father: the good old man, in the same night-cap and dressing-gown, runs forward to meet him; the prodigal son falls on his knees; in the distance the cook is killing the fatted calf, and the elder brother is asking the servants the cause of all the rejoicing. Under each picture I read some suitable German verses. All this I have preserved in my memory to the present day, as well as the little pots of balsams, the bed with speckled curtains, and the other objects with which I was then surrounded. I

can see at the present moment the host himself, a man of about fifty years of age, fresh and strong, in his long green surtout with three medals on faded ribbons.

I had scarcely settled my account with my old driver, when Dounia returned with the tea-urn. The little coquette saw at the second glance the impression she had produced upon me; she lowered her large blue eyes; I began to talk to her; she answered me without the least timidity, like a girl who has seen the world. I offered her father a glass of punch, to Dounia herself I gave a cup of tea, and then the three of us began to converse together, as if we were old acquaintances.

The horses had long been ready, but I felt reluctant to take leave of the Postmaster and his daughter. At last I bade them good-bye, the father wished me a pleasant journey, the daughter accompanied me to the *telega*. In the vestibule I stopped and asked her permission to kiss her; Dounia consented. . . . I can reckon up a great many kisses since that time, but not one which has left behind such a long, such a pleasant recollection.

Several years passed, and circumstances led me to the same road, and to the same places.

"But," thought I, "perhaps the old Postmaster has been changed, and Dounia may already be married."

The thought that one or the other of them might be dead also flashed through my mind, and I approached the station of A—— with a sad presentiment. The horses drew up before the little post-house. On entering the room, I immediately recognized the pictures illustrating the story of the Prodigal Son. The table and the bed stood in the same places as before, but the flowers were no longer on the window-sills, and everything around indicated decay and neglect.

The Postmaster was asleep under his sheep-skin pelisse; my arrival awoke him, and he rose up. . . . It was certainly Simeon Virin, but how aged! While he was preparing to register my traveling passport, I gazed at his gray hairs, the deep wrinkles upon his face, that had not been shaved for a long time, his bent back, and I was astonished to see how three or four years had been able to transform a strong and active individual into a feeble old man.

"Do you recognize me?" I asked him; "we are old acquaintances."

"May be," replied he mournfully; "this is a high road, and many travelers have stopped here."

"Is your Dounia well?" I continued.

The old man frowned.

"God knows," he replied.

"Probably she is married?"

The old man pretended not to have heard my question, and went on reading my passport in a low tone. I ceased questioning him and ordered some tea. Curiosity began to torment me, and I hoped that the punch would loosen the tongue of my old acquaintance.

I was not mistaken; the old man did not refuse the proffered glass. I observed that the rum dispelled his mournfulness. At the second glass he began to talk; he remembered me, or appeared as if he remembered me, and I heard from him a story, which at the time, deeply interested and affected me.

"So you knew my Dounia?" he began. "But who did not know her? Ah, Dounia. Dounia! What a girl she was!

Everybody who passed this way praised her; nobody had a word to say against her. The ladies used to give her presents—now a handkerchief, now a pair of earrings. The gentlemen used to stop intentionally, as if to dine or to take supper, but in reality only to take a longer look at her. However angry a gentleman might be, in her presence he grew calm and spoke graciously to me. Would you believe it, sir: couriers and Court messengers used to talk to her for half-hours at a stretch. It was she who kept the house; she put everything in order, got everything ready, and looked after everything. And I, like an old fool, could not look at her enough, could not idolize her enough. Did I not love my Dounia? Did I not indulge my child? Was not her life a happy one? But, no, there is no escaping misfortune: there is no evading what has been decreed."

Then he began to tell me his sorrow in detail. Three years before, one winter evening, when the Postmaster was ruling a new book, and his daughter behind the partition was sewing a dress, a *troika* drove up, and a traveler in a Circassian cap and military cloak, and enveloped in a shawl, entered the room and demanded horses. The horses were all out. On being told this, the traveler raised his voice and whip; but Dounia, accustomed to such scenes, ran out from behind the partition and graciously inquired of the traveler whether he would not like something to eat and drink.

The appearance of Dounia produced the usual effect. The traveler's anger subsided; he consented to wait for horses, and ordered supper. Having taken off his wet shaggy cap, and divested himself of his shawl and cloak, the traveler was seen to be a tall, young Hussar with a black moustache. He made himself comfortable with the Postmaster, and began to converse in a pleasant manner with him and his daughter. Supper was served. Meanwhile the horses returned, and the Postmaster ordered them, without being fed, to be harnessed immediately to the traveler's *kibitka*. But on returning to the room, he found the young man lying almost unconscious on the bench; he had come over faint, his head ached, it was impossible for him to continue his journey. What was to be done? The Postmaster gave up his own bed to him, and it was decided that if the sick man did not get better, they would send next day to C—— for the doctor.

The next day the Hussar was worse. His servant rode to the town for the doctor. Dounia bound round his head a handkerchief steeped in vinegar, and sat with her needlework beside his bed. In the presence of the Postmaster, the sick man sighed and scarcely uttered a word; but he drank two cups of coffee, and, with a sigh, ordered dinner. Dounia did not quit his side. He constantly asked for something to drink, and Dounia gave him a jug of lemonade prepared by herself. The sick man moistened his lips, and each time, on returning the jug, he feebly pressed Dounia's hand in token of gratitude.

About dinner time the doctor arrived. He felt the sick man's pulse, spoke to him in German, and declared in Russian that he only needed rest, and that in about a couple of days he would be able to set out on his journey. The Hussar gave him twenty-five roubles for his visit, and invited him to dinner;

the doctor accepted the invitation. They both ate with a good appetite, drank a bottle of wine, and separated very well satisfied with each other.

Another day passed, and the Hussar felt quite himself again. He was extraordinarily lively, joked unceasingly, now with Dounia, now with the Postmaster, whistled tunes, chatted with the travelers, copied their passports into the post-book, and so won upon the worthy Postmaster, that when the third day arrived, it was with regret that he parted with his amiable guest.

The day was Sunday; Dounia was preparing to go to mass. The Hussar's *kibitka* stood ready. He took leave of the Postmaster, after having generously recompensed him for his board and lodging, bade farewell to Dounia, and offered to drive her as far as the church, which was situated at the end of the village. Dounia hesitated.

"What are you afraid of?" asked her father. "His Excellency is not a wolf: he won't eat you. Drive with him as far as the church."

Dounia seated herself in the *kibitka* by the side of the Hussar, the servant sprang upon the box, the driver whistled, and the horses started off at a gallop.

The poor Postmaster could not understand how he could have allowed his Dounia to drive off with the Hussar, how he could have been so blind, and what had become of his senses at that moment. A half hour had not elapsed, before his heart began to grieve, and anxiety and uneasiness took posession of him to such a degree that he could contain himself no longer, and started off for mass himself. On reaching the church, he saw that the people were already beginning to disperse, but Dounia was neither in the churchyard nor in the porch. He hastened into the church: the priest was leaving the altar, the clerk was extinguishing the candles, two old women were still praying in a corner, but Dounia was not in the church. The poor father was scarcely able to summon up sufficient resolution to ask the clerk if she had been to mass. The clerk replied that she had not. The Postmaster returned home neither alive nor dead. One hope alone remained to him: Dounia, in the thoughtlessness of youth, might have taken it into her head to go on as far as the next station, where her godmother lived. In agonizing agitation he awaited the return of the *troika* in which he had let her set out. The driver did not return. At last, in the evening, he arrived alone and intoxicated, with the terrible news that Dounia had gone on with the Hussar at the other station.

The old man could not bear his misfortune: he immediately took to that very same bed where, the evening before, the young deceiver had lain. Taking all the circumstances into account, the Postmaster now came to the conclusion that the illness had been a mere pretense. The poor man fell ill with a violent fever; he was removed to C——, and in his place another person was appointed for the time being. The same doctor, who had attended the Hussar, attended him also. He assured the Postmaster that the young man had been perfectly well, and that at the time of his visit he had suspected him of some evil intentions, but that he had kept silent through fear of his whip. Whether the German spoke the truth or only wished to boast of his perspicacity, his communication afforded no consolation

to the poor invalid. Scarcely had the latter recovered from his illness, when he asked the Postmaster of C——— for two months' leave of absence, and without saying a word to anybody of his intentions, he set out on foot in search of his daughter.

From the traveling passport he found out that Captain Minsky was journeying from Smolensk to St. Petersburg. The *yemshik* who drove him, said that Dounia had wept the whole of the way, although she seemed to go of her own free will.

"Perhaps," thought the Postmaster, "I shall bring back home my erring ewe-lamb."

With this thought he reached St. Petersburg, stopped at the barracks of the Ismailovsky Regiment, in the quarters of a retired non-commissioned officer, an old comrade of his, and then began his search. He soon discovered that Captain Minsky was in St. Petersburg, and was living at the Demoutoff Hotel. The Postmaster resolved to call upon him.

Early in the morning he went to Minsky's ante-chamber, and requested that His Excellency might be informed that an old soldier wished to see him. The military servant, who was cleaning a boot on a boot-tree, informed him that his master was still asleep, and that he never received anybody before eleven o'clock. The Postmaster retired and returned at the appointed time. Minsky himself came out to him in his dressing-gown and red skull-cap.

"Well, my friend, what do you want?" he asked.

The old man's heart began to boil, tears started to his eyes, and he was only able to say in a trembling voice:

"Your Excellency! . . . do me the divine favour! . . .

Minsky glanced quickly at him, grew confused, took him by the hand, led him into his cabinet and locked the door.

"Your Excellency!" continued the old man: "what has fallen from the load is lost; give me back at least my poor Dounia. You have made her your plaything; do not ruin her entirely."

"What is done cannot be undone," said the young man, in the utmost confusion; "I am guilty before you, and am ready to ask your pardon, but do not think that I could forsake Dounia; she shall be happy, I give you my word of honour. Why do you want her? She loves me; she has become disused to her former existence. Neither you nor she will forget what has happened."

Then pushing something up the old man's sleeve, he opened the door, and the Postmaster, without remembering how, found himself in the street again.

For a long time he stood immovable; at last he observed in the cuff of his sleeve a roll of papers; he drew them out and unrolled several fifty rouble notes. Tears again filled his eyes, tears of indignation! He crushed the notes into a ball, flung them upon the ground, stamped upon them with the heel of his boot, and then walked away. . . . After having gone a few steps, he stopped, reflected, and returned . . . but the notes were no longer there. A well-dressed young man, observing him, ran towards a *droshky*, jumped in hurriedly, and cried to the driver: "Go on!"

The Postmaster did not pursue him. He resolved to return home to his station, but before doing so he wished to see his poor Dounia once more. For

that purpose, he returned to Minsky's lodgings a couple of days afterwards, but the military servant told him roughly that his master received nobody, pushed him out of the ante-chamber and slammed the door in his face. The Postmaster stood waiting for a long time, then he walked away.

That same day, in the evening, he was walking along the Liteinaia, having been to a service at the Church of the Afflicted. Suddenly a stylish *droshky* flew past him, and the Postmaster recognized Minsky. The *droshky* stopped in front of a three-storeyed house, close to the entrance, and the Hussar ran up the steps. A happy thought flashed through the mind of the Postmaster. He returned, and, approaching the coachman:

"Whose house is this, my friend?" asked he: "Doesn't it belong to Minsky?"

"Exactly so," replied the coachman: "what do you want?"

"Well, your master ordered me to carry a letter to his Dounia, and I have forgotten where his Dounia lives."

"She lives here, on the second floor. But you are late with your letter, my friend; he is with her himself just now."

"That doesn't matter," replied the Postmaster, with an inexplicable beating of the heart. "Thanks for your information, but I shall know how to manage my business." And with these words he ascended the staircase.

The door was locked; he rang. There was a painful delay of several seconds. The key rattled, and the door was opened.

"Does Avdotia Simeonovna live here?" he asked.

"Yes," replied a young female servant: "what do you want with her?"

The Postmaster without replying, walked into the room.

"You mustn't go in, you mustn't go in!" the servant cried out after him: "Avdotia Simeonovna has visitors."

But the Postmaster, without heeding her, walked straight on. The first two rooms were dark; in the third there was a light. He approached the open door and paused. In the room, which was beautifully furnished, sat Minsky in deep thought. Dounia, attired in the most elegant fashion, was sitting upon the arm of his chair, like a lady rider upon her English saddle. She was gazing tenderly at Minsky, and winding his black curls round her sparkling fingers. Poor Postmaster! Never had his daughter seemed to him so beautiful; he admired her against his will.

"Who is there?" she asked, without raising her head.

He remained silent. Receiving no reply, Dounia raised her head . . . and with a cry she fell upon the carpet. The alarmed Minsky hastened to pick her up, but suddenly catching sight of the old Postmaster in the doorway, he left Dounia and approached him, trembling with rage.

"What do you want?" he said to him, clenching his teeth. "Why do you steal after me everywhere, like a thief? Or do you want to murder me? Be off!" and with a powerful hand he seized the old man by the collar and pushed him down the stairs.

The old man returned to his lodging. His friend advised him to lodge a complaint, but the Postmaster reflected, waved his hand, and resolved to abstain from taking any further steps in the matter. Two days afterwards he left

St. Petersburg and returned to his station to resume his duties.

"This is the third year," he concluded, "that I have been living without Dounia, and I have not heard a word about her. Whether she is alive or not—God only knows. So many things happen. She is not the first, nor yet the last, that a traveling scoundrel has seduced, kept for a little while, and then forsaken. There are many such young fools in St. Petersburg, today in satin and velvet, and tomorrow sweeping the streets along with the wretched hangers-on of the dram-shops. Sometimes, when I think that Dounia also may come to such an end, then, in spite of myself, I sin and wish her in her grave. . . ."

Such was the story of my friend, the old Postmaster, a story more than once interrupted by tears, which he picturesquely wiped away with the skirt of his coat, like the zealous Terentitch in Dmitrieff's beautiful ballad. These tears were partly induced by the punch, of which he had drunk five glasses during the course of his narrative, but for all that, they produced a deep impression upon my heart. After taking leave of him, it was a long time before I could forget the old Postmaster, and for a long time I thought of poor Dounia. . . .

Passing through the little town of —— a short time ago, I remembered my friend. I heard that the station, over which he ruled, had been abolished. To my question: "Is the old Postmaster still alive?" nobody could give me a satisfactory reply. I resolved to pay a visit to the well-known place, and having hired horses, I set out for the village of N——.

It was in autumn. Grey clouds covered the sky; a cold wind blew across the reaped fields, carrying along with it the red and yellow leaves from the trees that it encountered. I arrived in the village at sunset, and stopped at the little post-house. In the vestibule (where Dounia had once kissed me) a stout woman came out to meet me, and in answer to my questions replied, that the old Postmaster had been dead for about a year, that his house was occupied by a brewer, and that she was the brewer's wife. I began to regret my useless journey, and the seven roubles that I had spent in vain.

"Of what did he die?" I asked the brewer's wife.

"Of drink, little father," replied she.

"And where is he buried?"

"On the outskirts of the village, near his late wife."

"Could somebody take me to his grave?"

"To be sure! Hi, Vanka; you have played with that cat long enough. Take this gentleman to the cemetery, and show him the Postmaster's grave."

At these words a ragged lad, with red hair, and a cast in his eye, ran up to me and immediately began to lead the way towards the burial-ground.

"Did you know the dead man?" I asked him on the road.

"Did I know him! He taught me how to cut blow-pipes. When he came out of the dram-shop (God rest his soul!) we used to run after him and call out: 'Grandfather! grandfather! some nuts!' and he used to throw nuts to us. He always used to play with us."

"And do the travellers remember him?"

"There are very few travellers now; the assessor passes this way sometimes,

but he doesn't trouble himself about dead people. Last summer a lady passed through here, and she asked after the old Postmaster, and went to his grave."

"What sort of a lady?" I asked with curiosity.

"A very beautiful lady," replied the lad. "She was in a carriage with six horses, and had along with her three little children, a nurse, and a little black dog; and when they told her that the old Postmaster was dead, she began to cry, and said to the children: 'Sit still, I will go to the cemetery.' I offered to show her the way. But the lady said: 'I know the way.' And she gave me a five-copeck piece . . . such a kind lady!"

We reached the cemetery, a dreary place, not inclosed in the least; it was sown with wooden crosses, but there was not a single tree to throw a shade over it. Never in my life had I seen such a dismal cemetery.

"This is the old Postmaster's grave," said the lad to me, leaping upon a heap of sand, in which was planted a black cross with a copper image.

"And did the lady come here?" asked I.

"Yes," replied Vanka; "I watched her from a distance. She lay down here, and remained lying down for a long time. Then she went back to the village, sent for the pope, gave him some money and drove off, after giving me a five-copeck piece . . . such an excellent lady!"

And I, too, gave the lad a five-copeck piece, and I no longer regretted the journey nor the seven rubles that I had spent on it.

Twenty-Six Men and a Girl

There were six-and-twenty of us—six-and-twenty living machines in a damp, underground cellar, where from morning till night we kneaded dough and rolled it into kringels. Opposite the underground window of our cellar was a bricked area, green and mouldy with moisture. The window was protected from outside with a close iron grating, and the light of the sun could not pierce through the window panes, covered as they were with flour dust.

Our employer had bars placed in front of the windows, so that we should not be able to give a bit of his bread to passing beggars, or to any of our fellows who were out of work and hungry. Our employer called us rogues, and gave us half-rotten tripe to eat for our midday meal, instead of meat. It was swelteringly close for us cooped up in that stone underground chamber, under the low, heavy, soot-blackened, cob-webby ceiling. Dreary and sickening was our life between its thick, dirty, mouldy walls.

Unrefreshed, and with a feeling of not having had our sleep out, we used to get up at five o'clock in the morning; and before six, we were already seated, worn out and apathetic, at the table, rolling out the dough which our mates had already prepared while we slept. The whole day, from ten in the early

morning until ten at night, some of us sat round that table, working up in our hands the yielding paste, rolling it to and fro so that it should not get stiff; while the others kneaded the swelling mass of dough. And the whole day the simmering water in the kettle, where the kringels were being cooked, sang low and sadly; and the baker's shovel scraped harshly over the oven floor, as he threw the slippery bits of dough out of the kettle on the heated bricks.

From morning till evening wood was burning in the oven, and the red glow of the fire gleamed and flickered over the walls of the bake-shop, as if silently mocking us. The giant oven was like the misshapen head of a monster in a fairy tale; it thrust itself up out of the floor, opened wide jaws, full of glowing fire, and blew hot breath upon us; it seemed to be ever watching out of its black air-holes our interminable work. Those two deep holes were like eyes—the cold, pitiless eyes of a monster. They watched us always with the same darkened glance, as if they were weary of seeing before them such eternal slaves, from whom they could expect nothing human, and therefore scorned them with the cold scorn of wisdom.

In meal dust, in the mud which we brought in from the yard on our boots, in the hot, sticky atmosphere, day in, day out, we rolled the dough into kringels, which we moistened with our own sweat. And we hated our work with a glowing hatred; we never ate what had passed through our hands, and preferred black bread to kringels. Sitting opposite each other, at a long table—nine facing nine—we moved our hands and fingers mechanically during endlessly long hours, till we were so accustomed to our monotonous work that we ceased to pay any attention to it.

We had all studied each other so constantly, that each of us knew every wrinkle of his mates' faces. It was not long also before we had exhausted almost every topic of conversation; that is why we were most of the time silent, unless we were chaffing each other; but one cannot always find something about which to chaff another man, especially when that man is one's mate. Neither were we much given to finding fault with one another; how, indeed, could one of us poor devils be in a position to find fault with another, when we were all of us half dead and, as it were, turned to stone? For the heavy drudgery seemed to crush all feeling out of us. But silence is only terrible and fearful for those who have said everything and have nothing more to say to each other; for men, on the contrary, who have never begun to communicate with one another, it is easy and simple.

Sometimes, too, we sang; and this is how it happened that we began to sing: one of us would sigh deeply in the midst of our toil, like an overdriven horse, and then we would begin one of those songs whose gentle swaying melody seems always to ease the burden on the singer's heart.

At first one sang by himself, and we others sat in silence listening to his solitary song, which, under the heavy vaulted roof of the cellar, died gradually away, and became extinguished, like a little fire in the steppes, on a wet autumn night, when the gray heaven hangs like a heavy mass over the earth. Then another would join in with the singer, and now two soft, sad voices would break into song in our narrow, dull hole

of a cellar. Suddenly others would join in, and the song would roll forward like a wave, would grow louder and swell upward, till it would seem as if the damp, foul walls of our stone prison were widening out and opening. Then, all six-and-twenty of us would be singing; our loud, harmonious song would fill the whole cellar, our voices would travel outside and beyond, striking, as it were, against the walls in moaning sobs and sighs, moving our hearts with soft, tantalizing ache, tearing open old wounds, and awakening longings.

The singers would sigh deeply and heavily; suddenly one would become silent and listen to the others singing, then let his voice flow once more in the common tide. Another would exclaim in a stifled voice, "Ah!" and would shut his eyes, while the deep, full sound waves would show him, as it were, a road, in front of him—a sunlit, broad road in the distance, which he himself, in thought, wandered along.

But the flame flickers once more in the huge oven, the baker scrapes incessantly with his shovel, the water simmers in the kettle, and the flicker of the fire on the wall dances as before in silent mockery. While in other men's words we sing out our dumb grief, the weary burden of live men robbed of the sunlight, the burden of slaves.

So we lived, we six-and-twenty, in the vault-like cellar of a great stone house, and we suffered each one of us, as if we had to bear on our shoulders the whole three stories of that house.

But we had something else good, besides the singing—something we loved, that perhaps took the place of the sunshine.

In the second story of our house there was established a gold-embroiderer's shop, and there, living among the other embroidery girls, was Tanya, a little maid-servant of sixteen. Every morning there peeped in through the glass door a rosy little face, with merry blue eyes; while a ringing, tender voice called out to us:

"Little prisoners! Have you any kringels, please, for me?"

At that clear sound, we know so well, we all used to turn round, gazing with simple-hearted joy at the pure girlish face which smiled at us so sweetly. The sight of the small nose pressed against the window-pane, and of the white teeth gleaming between the half-open lips, had become for us a daily pleasure. Tumbling over each other we used to jump up to open the door, and she would step in, bright and cheerful, holding out her apron, with her head thrown on one side, and a smile on her lips. Her thick, long chestnut hair fell over her shoulder and across her breast. But we, ugly, dirty and misshapen as we were, looked up at her—the threshold door was four steps above the floor—looked up at her with heads thrown back, wishing her good-morning, and speaking strange, unaccustomed words, which we kept for her only. Our voices became softer when we spoke to her, our jests were lighter. For her—everything was different with us. The baker took from his oven a shovel of the best and the brownest kringels, and threw them deftly into Tanya's apron.

"Be off with you now, or the boss will catch you!" we warned her each time. She laughed roguishly, called out cheerfully: "Good-bye, poor prisoners!" and slipped away as quick as a mouse.

That was all. But long after she had gone we talked about her to one another with pleasure. It was always the same thing as we had said yesterday and the day before, because everything about us, including ourselves and her, remained the same—as yesterday—and as always.

Painful and terrible it is when a man goes on living, while nothing changes around him; and when such an existence does not finally kill his soul, then the monotony becomes with time, even more and more painful. Generally we spoke about women in such a way, that sometimes it was loathsome to us ourselves to hear our rude, shameless talk. The women whom we knew deserved perhaps nothing better. But about Tanya we never let fall an evil word; none of us ever ventured so much as to lay a hand on her, even too free a jest she never heard from us. Maybe this was so because she never remained for long with us; she flashed on our eyes like a star falling from the sky, and vanished; and maybe because she was little and very beautiful, and everything beautiful calls forth respect, even in coarse people. And besides—though our life of penal labor had made us dull beasts, oxen, we were still men, and, like all men, could not live without worshipping something or other. Better than her we had none, and none but her took any notice of us, living in the cellar—no one, though there were dozens of people in the house. And then, too—most likely, this was the chief thing—we all regarded her as something of our own, something existing as it were only by virtue of our kringels. We took on ourselves in turns the duty of providing her with hot kringels, and this became for us like a daily sacrifice to our idol, it became almost a sacred rite, and every day it bound us more closely to her. Besides kringels, we gave Tanya a great deal of advice—to wear warmer clothes, not to run upstairs too quickly, not to carry heavy bundles of wood. She listened to all our counsels with a smile, answered them by a laugh, and never took our advice, but we were not offended at that; all we wanted was to show how much care we bestowed upon her.

Often she would apply to us with different requests, she asked us, for instance, to open the heavy door into the store-cellar, and to chop wood; with delight and a sort of pride, we did this for her, and everything else she wanted.

But when one of us asked her to mend his solitary shirt for him, she said, with a laugh of contempt:

"What next! A likely idea!"

We made great fun of the queer fellow who could entertain such an idea, and—never asked her to do anything else. We loved her—all is said in that. Man always wants to lay his love on someone, though sometimes he crushes, sometimes he sullies, with it; he may poison another life because he loves without respecting the beloved. We were bound to love Tanya, for we had no one else to love.

At times one of us would suddenly begin to reason like this:

"And why do we make so much of the wench? What is there in her? eh? What a to-do we make about her!"

The man who dared to utter such words we promptly and coarsely cut short—we wanted something to love: we had found it and loved it, and what we twenty-six loved must be for each of us unalterable, as a holy thing, and

anyone who acted against us in this was our enemy. We loved, maybe, not what was really good, but you see there were twenty-six of us, and so we always wanted to see what was precious to us held sacred by the rest.

Our love is not less burdensome than hate, and maybe that is just why some proud souls maintain that our hate is more flattering than our love. But why do they not run away from us, if it is so?

* * * * * * *

Besides our department, our employer had also a bread-bakery; it was in the same house, separated from our hole only by a wall; but the bakers—there were four of them—held aloof from us, considering their work superior to ours, and therefore themselves better than us; they never used to come into our workroom, and laughed contemptuously at us when they met us in the yard. We, too, did not go to see them; this was forbidden by our employer, from fear that we should steal the fancy bread. We did not like the bakers, because we envied them; their work was lighter than ours, they were paid more, and were better fed; they had a light, spacious workroom, and they were all so clean and healthy—and that made them hateful to us. We all looked gray and yellow; three of us had syphilis, several suffered from skin diseases, one was completely crippled by rheumatism. On holidays and in their leisure time the bakers wore pea-jackets and creaking boots, two of them had accordions, and they all used to go for strolls in the town gardens—we wore filthy rags and leather clogs or plaited shoes on our feet, the police would not let us into the town gardens—could we possibly like the bakers?

And one day we learned that their chief baker had been drunk, the master had sacked him and had already taken on another, and that this other was a soldier, wore a satin waistcoat and a watch and gold chain. We were inquisitive to get a sight of such a dandy, and in the hope of catching a glimpse of him we kept running one after another out into the yard.

But he came of his own accord into our room. Kicking at the door, he pushed it open, and leaving it ajar, stood in the doorway smiling, and said to us:

"God help the work! Good-morning, mates!"

The ice-cold air, which streamed in through the open door, curled in streaks of vapor round his feet. He stood on the threshold, looked us up and down, and under his fair, twisted mustache gleamed big yellow teeth. His waistcoat was really something quite out of the common, blue-flowered, brilliant with shining little buttons of red stones. He also wore a watch chain.

He was a fine fellow, this soldier; tall, healthy, rosy-cheeked, and his big, clear eyes had a friendly, cheerful glance. He wore on his head a white starched cap, and from under his spotlessly clean apron peeped the pointed toes of fashionable, well-blacked boots.

Our baker asked him politely to shut the door. The soldier did so without hurrying himself, and began to question us about the master. We exclaimed to him, all speaking together, that our employer was a thorough-going brute, a rogue, a knave, and a slave-driver; in a word, we repeated to him all that can and must be said about an employer,

but cannot be repeated here. The soldier listened to us, twisted his mustache, and watched us with a friendly, open-hearted look.

"But haven't you got a lot of girls here?" he asked suddenly.

Some of us began to laugh deferentially, others put on a meaning expression, and one of us explained to the soldier that there were nine girls here.

"You make the most of them?" asked the soldier, with a wink.

We laughed, but not so loudly, and with some embarrassment. Many of us would have liked to have shown the soldier that we also were tremendous fellows with the girls, but not one of us could do so; and one of our number confessed as much, when he said in a low voice:

"That sort of thing is not in our line."

"Well, no; it wouldn't quite do for you," said the soldier with conviction, after having looked us over. "There is something wanting about you all. You don't look the right sort. You've no sort of appearance; and the women, you see, they like a bold appearance, they will have a well set-up body. Everything has to be tip-top for them. That's why they respect strength. They want an arm like that!"

The soldier drew his right hand, with its turned-up shirt sleeve, out of his pocket, and showed us his bare arm. It was white and strong, and covered with shining yellow hairs.

"Leg and chest, all must be strong. And then a man must be dressed in the latest fashion, so as to show off his looks to advantage. Yes, all the women take to me. Whether I call to them, or whether I beckon them, they with one accord, five at a time, throw themselves at my head."

He sat down on a flour sack, and told at length all about the way women loved him, and how bold he was with them. Then he left, and after the door had creaked to behind him, we sat for a long time silent, and thought about him and his talk. Then we all suddenly broke silence together, and it became apparent that we were all equally pleased with him. He was such a nice, open-hearted fellow; he came to see us without any standoffishness, sat down and chatted. No one else came to us like that, and no one else talked to us in that friendly sort of way. And we continued to talk of him and his coming triumph among the embroidery girls, who passed us by with contemptuous sniffs when they saw us in the yard, or who looked straight through us as if we had been air. But we admired them always when we met them outside, or when they walked past our windows; in winter, in fur jackets and toques to match; in summer, in hats trimmed with flowers, and with colored parasols in their hands. We talked, however, about these girls in a way that would have made them mad with shame and rage, if they could have heard us.

"If only he does not get hold of little Tanya!" said the baker, suddenly, in an anxious tone of voice.

We were silent, for these words troubled us. Tanya had quite gone out of our minds, supplanted, put on one side by the strong, fine figure of the soldier.

Then began a lively discussion; some of us maintained that Tanya would never lower herself so; others thought she would not be able to resist him, and

the third group proposed to give him a thrashing if he should try to annoy Tanya. And, finally, we all decided to watch the soldier and Tanya, and to warn the girl against him. This brought the discussion to an end.

Four weeks had passed by since then; during this time the soldier baked white bread, walked about with the gold-embroidery girls, visited us often, but did not talk any more about his conquests; only twisted his mustache, and licked his lips lasciviously.

Tanya called in as usual every morning for "little kringels," and was as gay and as nice and friendly with us as ever. We certainly tried once or twice to talk to her about the soldier, but she called him a "goggle-eyed calf," and made fun of him all round, and that set our minds at rest. We saw how the gold-embroidery girls carried on with the soldier, and we were proud of our girl; Tanya's behavior reflected honor on us all; we imitated her, and began in our talks to treat the soldier with small consideration. She became dearer to us, and we greeted her with more friendliness and kindliness every morning.

One day the soldier came to see us, a bit drunk, and sat down and began to laugh. When we asked him what he was laughing about, he explained to us:

"Why two of them—that Lydka girl and Grushka—have been clawing each other on my account. You should have seen the way they went for each other! Ha! ha! One got hold of the other one by the hair, threw her down on the floor of the passage, and sat on her! Ha! ha! ha! They scratched and tore each others' faces. It was enough to make one die with laughter! Why is it women can't fight fair? Why do they always scratch one another, eh?"

He sat on the bench, healthy, fresh and jolly; he sat there and went on laughing. We were silent. This time he made an unpleasant impression on us.

"Well, it's a funny thing what luck I have with the women-folk! Eh? I've laughed till I'm ill! One wink, and it's all over with them! It's the d-devil!"

He raised his white hairy hands, and slapped them down on his knees. And his eyes seemed to reflect such frank astonishment, as if he were himself quite surprised at his good luck with women. His fat, red face glistened with delight and self satisfaction, and he licked his lips more than ever.

Our baker scraped the shovel violently and angrily along the oven floor, and all at once he said sarcastically:

"There's no great strength needed to pull up fir saplings, but try a real pine-tree."

"Why—what do you mean by saying that to me?" asked the soldier.

"Oh, well . . ."

"What is it?"

"Nothing—it slipped out!"

"No, wait a minute! What's the point? What pine-tree?"

Our baker did not answer, working rapidly away with the shovel at the oven; flinging into it the half-cooked kringels, taking out those that were done, and noisily throwing them on the floor to the boys who were stringing them on bast. He seemed to have forgotten the soldier and his conversation with him. But the soldier had all at once dropped into a sort of uneasiness. He got up on to his feet, and went to the oven, at the risk of knocking against

the handle of the shovel, which was waving spasmodically in the air.

"No, tell me, do—who is it? You've insulted me. I? There's not one could withstand me, n-no! And you say such insulting things to me?"

He really seemed genuinely hurt. He must have had nothing else to pride himself on except his gift for seducing women; maybe, except for that, there was nothing living in him, and it was only that by which he could feel himself a living man.

There are men to whom the most precious and best thing in their lives appears to be some disease of their soul or body. They spend their whole life in relation to it, and only living by it, suffering from it, they sustain themselves on it, they complain of it to others, and so draw the attention of their fellows to themselves. For that they extract sympathy from people, and apart from it they have nothing at all. Take from them that disease, cure them, and they will be miserable, because they have lost their one resource in life—they are left empty then. Sometimes a man's life is so poor, that he is driven instinctively to prize his vice and to live by it; one may say for a fact that often men are vicious from boredom.

The soldier was offended, he went up to our baker and roared:

"No, tell me do—who?"

"Tell you?" the baker turned suddenly to him.

"Well?"

"You know Tanya?"

"Well?"

"Well, there then! Only try."

"I?"

"You!"

"Her? Why that's nothing to me—pooh!"

"We shall see!"

"You will see! Ha! ha!"

"She'll——"

"Give me a month!"

"What a braggart you are, soldier!"

"A fortnight! I'll prove it! Who is it? Tanya! Pooh!"

"Well, get out. You're in my way!"

"A fortnight—and it's done! Ah, you——"

"Get out, I say."

Our baker, all at once, flew into a rage and brandished his shovel. The soldier staggered away from him in amazement, looked at us, paused, and softly, malignantly said, "Oh, all right, then!" and went away.

During the dispute we had all sat silent, absorbed in it. But when the soldier had gone, eager, loud talk and noise arose among us.

Some one shouted to the baker: "It's a bad job that you've started, Pavel!"

"Do your work!" answered the baker savagely.

We felt that the soldier had been deeply aggrieved, and that danger threatened Tanya. We felt this, and at the same time we were all possessed by a burning curiosity, most agreeable to us. What would happen? Would Tanya hold out against the soldier? And almost all cried confidently: "Tanya? She'll hold out! You won't catch her with your bare arms!"

We longed terribly to test the strength of our idol; we forcibly proved to each other that our divinity was a strong divinity and would come victorious out of this ordeal. We began at last to fancy that we had not worked enough on the soldier, that he would forget the

dispute, and that we ought to pique his vanity more keenly. From that day we began to live a different life, a life of nervous tension, such as we had never known before. We spent whole days in arguing together; we all grew, as it were, sharper; and got to talk more and better. It seemed to us that we were playing some sort of game with the devil, and the stake on our side was Tanya. And when we learned from the bakers that the soldier had begun "running after our Tanya," we felt a sort of delighted terror, and life was so interesting that we did not even notice that our employer had taken advantage of our preoccupation to increase our work by fourteen pounds of dough a day. We seemed, indeed, not even tired by our work. Tanya's name was on our lips all day long. And every day we looked for her with a certain special impatience. Sometimes we pictured to ourselves that she would come to us, and it would not be the same Tanya as of old, but somehow different. We said nothing to her, however, of the dispute regarding her. We asked her no questions, and behaved as well and affectionately to her as ever. But even in this a new element crept in, alien to our old feeling for Tanya—and that new element was keen curiosity, keen and cold as a steel knife.

"Mates! To-day the time's up!" our baker said to us one morning, as he set to work.

We were well aware of it without his reminder; but still we were thrilled.

"Look at her. She'll be here directly," suggested the baker.

One of us cried out in a troubled voice, "Why! as though one could notice anything!"

And again an eager, noisy discussion sprang up among us. To-day we were about to prove how pure and spotless was the vessel into which we had poured all that was best in us. This morning, for the first time, it became clear to us, that we really were playing a great game; that we might, indeed, through the exaction of this proof of purity, lose our divinity altogether.

During the whole of the intervening fortnight we had heard that Tanya was persistently followed by the soldier, but not one of us had thought of asking her how she had behaved toward him. And she came every morning to fetch her kringels, and was the same toward us as ever.

This morning, too, we heard her voice outside: "You poor prisoners! Here I am!"

We opened the door, and when she came in we all remained, contrary to our usual custom, silent. Our eyes fixed on her, we did not know how to speak to her, what to ask her. And there we stood in front of her, a gloomy, silent crowd. She seemed to be surprised at this unusual reception; and suddenly we saw her turn white and become uneasy, then she asked, in a choking voice:

"Why are you—like this?"

"And you?" the baker flung at her grimly, never taking his eyes off her.

"What am I?"

"N—nothing."

"Well, then, give me quickly the little kringels."

Never before had she bidden us hurry.

"There's plenty of time," said the baker, not stirring, and not removing his eyes from her face.

Then, suddenly, she turned round and disappeared through the door.

The baker took his shovel and said, calmly turning away toward the oven:

"Well, that settles it! But a soldier! a common beast like that—a low cur!"

Like a flock of sheep we all pressed round the table, sat down silently, and began listlessly to work. Soon, however, one of us remarked:

"Perhaps, after all——"

"Shut up!" shouted the baker.

We were all convinced that he was a man of judgment, a man who knew more than we did about things. And at the sound of his voice we were convinced of the soldier's victory, and our spirits became sad and downcast.

At twelve o'clock—while we were eating our dinner—the soldier came in. He was as clean and as smart as ever, and looked at us—as usual—straight in the eyes. But we were all awkward in looking at him.

"Now then, honored sirs, would you like me to show you a soldier's quality?" he said, chuckling proudly.

"Go out into the passage, and look through the crack—do you understand?"

We went into the passage, and stood all pushing against one another, squeezed up to the cracks of the wooden partition of the passage that looked into the yard. We had not to wait long. Very soon Tanya, with hurried footsteps and a careworn face, walked across the yard, jumping over the puddles of melting snow and mud: she disappeared into the store cellar. Then whistling, and not hurrying himself, the soldier followed in the same direction. His hands were thrust in his pockets; his mustaches were quivering.

Rain was falling, and we saw how its drops fell into the puddles, and the puddles were wrinkled by them. The day was damp and gray—a very dreary day. Snow still lay on the roofs, but on the ground dark patches of mud had begun to appear. And the snow on the roofs too was covered by a layer of brownish dirt. The rain fell slowly with a depressing sound. It was cold and disagreeable for us waiting.

The first to come out of the store cellar was the soldier; he walked slowly across the yard, his mustaches twitching, his hands in his pockets—the same as always.

Then—Tanya, too, came out. Her eyes—her eyes were radiant with joy and happiness, and her lips—were smiling. And she walked as though in a dream, staggering, with unsteady steps.

We could not bear this quietly. All of us at once rushed to the door, dashed out into the yard and—hissed at her, reviled her viciously, loudly, wildly.

She started at seeing us, and stood as though rooted in the mud under her feet. We formed a ring round her! and malignantly, without restraint, abused her with vile words, said shameful things to her.

We did this not loudly, not hurriedly, seeing that she could not get away, that she was hemmed in by us, and we could deride her to our hearts' content. I don't know why, but we did not beat her. She stood in the midst of us, and turned her head this way and that, as she heard our insults. And we—more and more violently flung at her the filth and venom of our words.

The color had left her face. Her blue eyes, so happy a moment before, opened

wide, her bosom heaved, and her lips quivered.

We in a ring round her avenged ourselves on her as though she had robbed us. She belonged to us, we had lavished on her our best, and though that best was a beggar's crumb, still we were twenty-six, she was one, and so there was no pain we could give her equal to her guilt! How we insulted her! She was still mute, still gazed at us with wild eyes, and a shiver ran all over her.

We laughed, roared, yelled. Other people ran up from somewhere and joined us. One of us pulled Tanya by the sleeve of her blouse.

Suddenly her eyes flashed; deliberately she raised her hands to her head and straightening her hair she said loudly but calmly, straight in our faces:

"Ah, you miserable prisoners!"

And she walked straight at us, walked as directly as though we had not been before her, as though we were not blocking her way.

And hence it was that no one did actually prevent her passing.

Walking out of our ring, without turning round, she said loudly and with indescribable contempt:

"Ah, you scum—brutes."

And—was gone.

We were left in the middle of the yard, in the rain, under the gray sky without the sun.

Then we went mutely away to our damp stone cellar. As before—the sun never peeped in at our windows, and Tanya came no more!

Fair Fiordespina

In the noble city of Spoleto, in Umbria, there resided, not many years ago, a young man of the name of Anton Luigi Migliorelli, nobly born, but of a strange and whimsical disposition. Being also of a sanguine temperament, combined with too little judgment, he had the misfortune to imagine himself in love with a very beautiful and accomplished young lady, sprung from one of the first families in Spoleto, whose names was Fiordespina. What rendered the affair worse, she had already bestowed her hand in marriage upon another, a wealthy citizen of good descent, called Filolauro, from which his lady most generally went by the name of Fiordespina Lauri. In point of manly beauty and accomplishment, Filolauro was in no way unworthy of possessing so charming a companion; nor do I believe that throughout all Italy there was a similar instance of conjugal union, happiness, and fidelity. Such, indeed, were the mutual sacrifices, the devotion, and tenderness which they invariably displayed, as to afford a perfect pattern of the respective characters and the conduct to be observed in so intimate a union.

Their happiness seemed as if it were too exquisite and unalloyed to last; and the secret fiend that was about to invade the Eden of their love and repose was already at work, inspiring the soul of Anton Luigi with thoughts equally dangerous to their safety and their honor. Ardently bent upon the pursuit

of every object in which he engaged, and having frequent opportunities of enjoying the society and observing the charms and accomplishments of the lovely Fiordespina, he grew so deeply enamored of them that in a short time he felt himself unable to control the expression of his feelings.

Yet, after having adopted every expedient in his power, all the arts and flatteries of which he was the master, he had the mortification to find that he not only made no progress in her good opinion, but that she did not even deign to notice his numerous efforts to conciliate and please her. Equally piqued and impassioned, he vowed to be revenged upon her supposed pride and indifference; while he was compelled at the same time to conceal his attentions as much as possible, as the manners of the people of Spoleto were far more strict in this respect than those of many other places, persons of both sexes being in the habit of revenging themselves upon very slight provocation, and even of bearing arms, when occasion required, in open field against their enemies.

There is no point upon which they are more eager to proceed to extremities than in regard to the honor of their women, so that they will scarcely permit the breath of heaven to play upon the faces of their married dames of rank, while the husbands, on the other hand, are not permitted to show the least regard for single ladies. Thus our unfortunate lover found himself rather awkwardly situated, his feelings being about as unpleasant as those of a culprit preparing for his final journey, since his beloved Fiordespina paid no more attention to him than if there had been no such person in the world, a behavior which he felt far more difficult to bear than if she had honored him with her resentment, or even her aversion and contempt.

In this dilemma he believed the wisest as well as the shortest way would be to put a period to his existence; but always when he was on the point of executing his threat, the idea that he was for ever leaving the beautiful Fiordespina flashed across his mind, and he relinquished it. Still he conceived it quite incumbent upon him either to die like a true lover or win the lady's regard, and with this magnanimous resolution he watched his first opportunity of obtaining a final interview with the lady. Happening to hear that Filolauro was about to accompany a party of young men on an excursion of pleasure into the country, he had no sooner watched the servant who followed him fairly out of sight, than he hastened to his house, but had the mortification to perceive the beloved object in company with two of her youthful companions.

Upon this his exasperation was such as to mount to a degree of frenzy, and being in a most favorable mood for listening to the counsels of our great adversary, who is never known to neglect such happy opportunities of adding to the number of his subjects, he resolved in one way or other to bring the matter to a concusion, whether it were by dagger, rope, or poison, that very evening. With this view he continued to keep watch until after Filolauro's return, who, being accustomed to walk out with his friends, sometimes as far as the Borgo San Maffio, when the evening was fine, upon this occasion did not take leave of them until near midnight. His beau-

tiful wife, whose thoughts were ever with him in his absence, anxious at the lateness of the hour, was now eagerly looking out for him, after having prepared what viands she imagined would prove most agreeable on his return.

Filolauro had just reached the piazza near the fort, close to his own house, when he was met by Antonio Luigi full of the most desperate designs, who, drawing his sword, cried out in great fury, "At last, villian, thou art dead!" at the same moment wounding him severely.

"Ah! traitor," exclaimed the other, "this to me!" and rushing upon him, he closed with him before he could make his escape.

The noble lady, overhearing some disturbance, and recognizing her consort's voice, with the courage that distinguished the ladies of Spoleto, instantly seized her husband's javelin that lay at hand, and rushed to the door. There she indeed beheld him struggling in the grasp of his assassin, while his blood stained the ground upon which they fought; and sufficiently distinguishing the combatants by the light of the moon, with the strength of an Amazon, she passed the weapon through the body of Anton Luigi at a single blow. He instantly fell dead at her feet, while she, crying out to her husband that he was only wounded, besought him to take refuge in the house.

By the time she had assisted him back and restored the javelin to its place, a numerous crowd was collecting upon the spot, some of whom observing the way they took, followed them into the house, where they found the lady attempting to stanch her husband's wounds, at the same time trying to encourage him and calling out for assistance. Discovering no weapon but the sword lying by the side of the deceased, they were unable to account for what they saw; and having borne the body of Anton Luigi into an adjoining church and procured surgical aid for the wounded man, the people gradually dispersed.

On the following morning, the governor, hearing of the homicide, and no one being accused of it, thought it somewhat strange, and instituted a more strict inquiry. Being a native of Lucca, of severe character, and not very kindly disposed towards the ladies of Spoleto, he despatched his officers at once to the residence of the fair Fiordespina, with orders to seize her together with her husband, whom, wounded as he was, they threw into a dungeon. His unhappy wife was next conducted bound into the hall allotted for the execution of assassins, where, the evidence of some persons in the crowd being taken, she was actually condemned by her merciless judge to suffer the torture of the question. But rather than accuse either her husband or herself of having committed such an act, which she had reasons for knowing that her inexorable judge would never admit to have been done in self-defense, she chose to submit, with the fortitude of a martyr, to everything that his cruelty could devise. Moved with pity at her sufferings, several of the spectators voluntarily came forward to prove that no weapon except that of the deceased had been found upon the spot, and that it was hardly likely that a single woman could have deprived a soldier of his own sword and of his life.

To this the savage tyrant only re-

plied that such was more probably the case than that so noble a youth should have destroyed himself; and upon this he commanded the executioners to proceed. When, however, the populace, who believed her to be innocent, heard her renewed cries, there ran a confused murmur among the crowd, that, gradually assuming a louder and more angry tone, reminded the cruel governor that he had to deal with the proud and daring natives of Spoleto.

Finding his victim resolutely bent against confession, he began to take the alarm, and ordering her to be set free, he consoled himself with the hope of inflicting still heavier punishment upon her husband. For this purpose he had him brought forth, and condemned to suffer yet more terrific pains than had been inflicted upon his wife. The moment, however, she beheld him in the presence of their ferocious tormentor, she was unable to bear the very idea, much less the sight, of the most beloved object on earth sharing with her the same fate. Although instant death became the penalty of her confession, yet, in order to spare him the suffering she had herself so nobly borne, she thus addressed the governor:

"Unbind that gentleman, signor. Never let it be said that a savage and remorseless tyrant, such as thou art, had it in his power to inflict his savage torments upon the limbs of my honored lord. No, it was I who did the deed. Hear, me, I say! I alone smote the assassin of my husband dead at my feet. Oh! ye just heavens, ye noble people of Spoleto, be near me; aid me in my utter woe; let him not deprive me of the only object that is dear to these eyes!"

At once surprised and grieved to hear her declare herself guilty of an act by a confession which the severest tortures had failed to wring from her, the spectators, as well as the governor himself, struck with the excessive proof of affection which it displayed, were inclined to consider it as little less than miraculous. What must have been the excess of tenderness and attachment that could excite the soul of a delicate woman to such an unexampled degree of heroism and magnanimity as to confess, out of pity and affection for her husband, what she would otherwise have concealed under the infliction of torture and of death itself!

To such an appeal even the heart of the governor, callous and ferocious as he was, could no longer be insensible. Taken by surprise, astonished at the grandeur and beauty of sentiment it displayed, and of which he had formed no previous idea, after remaining lost in doubt and wonder for some moments, his aspect assumed a perfectly opposite expression, and in milder tones than he had ever before perhaps uttered, he commanded the officers to unbind her husband. He next sent for the father of the deceased, requesting to know what course he wished to be pursued. The poor old man, thus unhappily deprived of his son, yet aware that no cause of enmity had subsisted between the families, nobly came forward to state everything he knew relating to the unfortunate passion of his son, and boldly taxed the governor with the most culpable conduct in having omitted to receive his evidence until he had unjustly condemned the innocent to suffer.

At the same time he tenderly embraced the unhappy prisoners, and weep-

ing over the guilty conduct of his son, appealed to the feelings of the spectators, conjuring them to join in soliciting a free pardon, if pardon it could be called, where no offense had been committed, at the hands of the governor. The relenting feelings of the latter at length yielded to the energy and truth of the old man's appeal; for, having liberated the captives, he descended from his judgment-seat, and, struggling with contending emotions, turned away from the spectators, and soon disappeared.

Dream-Woman

Some years ago there lived in the suburbs of a large seaport town on the west coast of England a man in humble circumstances, by name Isaac Scatchard. His means of subsistence were derived from any employment that he could get as an ostler, and occasionally when times went well with him, from temporary engagements in service as stable-helper in private houses. Though a faithful, steady, and honest man, he got on badly in his calling. His ill-luck was proverbial among his neighbors. He was always missing good opportunities by no fault of his own, and always living longest in service with amiable people who were not punctual payers of wages. "Unlucky Isaac" was his nickname in his own neighborhood, and no one could say that he did not richly deserve it.

With far more than one man's fair share of adversity to endure, Isaac had but one consolation to support him, and that was of the dreariest and most negative kind. He had no wife and children to increase his anxieties and add to the bitterness of his various failures in life. It might have been from mere insensibility, or it might have been from generous unwillingness to involve another in his own unlucky destiny; but the fact undoubtedly was, that he arrived at the middle term of life without marrying, and, what is much more remarkable, without once exposing himself, from eighteen to eight and thirty, to the genial imputation of ever having had a sweetheart.

When he was out of service he lived alone with his widowed mother. Mrs. Scatchard was a woman above the average in her lowly station as to capacity and manners. She had seen better days, as the phrase is, but she never referred to them in the presence of curious visitors; and, though perfectly polite to everyone who approached her, never cultivated any intimacies among her neighbors. She contrived to provide hardly enough for her simple wants by doing rough work for the tailors, and always managed to keep a decent home for her son to return to whenever his ill-luck drove him out helpless into the world.

One bleak autumn, when Isaac was getting on fast toward forty, and when he was, as usual, out of a place through no fault of his own, he set forth from his mother's cottage on a long walk inland to a gentleman's seat, where he had heard that a stable-helper was required.

It wanted then but two days of his birthday; and Mrs. Scatchard, with her usual fondness, made him promise, before he started, that he would be back in time to keep that anniversary with her, in as festive a way as their poor means would allow. Is was easy for him to comply with this request, even supposing he slept a night each way on the road.

He was to start from home on Monday morning, and, whether he got the new place or not, he was to be back for his birthday dinner on Wednesday at two o'clock.

Arriving at his destination too late on the Monday night to make application for the stable-helper's place, he slept at the village inn, and in good time on the Tuesday morning presented himself at the gentleman's house to fill the vacant situation. Here again his ill-luck pursued him as inexorably as ever. The excellent written testimonials to his character which he was able to procure availed him nothing; his long walk had been taken in vain; only the day before the stable-helper's place had been given to another man.

Isaac accepted this new disappointment resignedly and as a matter of course. Naturally slow in capacity, he had the bluntness of sensibility and phlegmatic patience of disposition which frequently distinguish men with sluggishly working mental powers. He thanked the gentleman's steward with his usual quiet civility for granting him an interview, and took his departure with no appearance of unusual depression in his face or manner.

Before starting on his homeward walk, he made some inquiries at the inn, and ascertained that he might save a few miles on his return by following a new road. Furnished with full instructions, several times repeated, as to the various turnings he was to take, he set forth on his homeward journey, and walked on all day with only one stoppage for bread and cheese. Just as it was getting toward dark, the rain came on and the wind began to rise, and he found himself, to make matters worse, in a part of the country with which he was entirely unacquainted, though he knew himself to be some fifteen miles from home. The first house he found to inquire at was a lonely roadside inn, standing on the outskirts of a thick wood. Solitary as the place looked, it was welcome to a lost man who was also hungry, thirsty, foot-sore, and wet. The landlord was civil, and respectable-looking, and the price he asked for a bed was reasonable enough. Isaac therefore decided on stopping comfortably at the inn for that night.

He was constitutionally a temperate man. His supper consisted of two rashers of bacon, a slice of home-made bread and a pint of ale. He did not go to bed immediately after this moderate meal, but sat up with the landlord, talking about his bad prospects and his long run of ill-luck, and diverging from these topics to the subject of horseflesh and racing. Nothing was said either by himself, his host, or the few laborers who strayed into the tap-room, which could, in the slightest degree, excite the very small and very dull imaginative faculty which Isaac Scatchard possessed.

At a little after eleven the house was closed. Isaac went round with the landlord and held the candle while the doors and lower windows were being secured.

He noticed with surprise the strength of the bolts and bars, and iron-sheathed shutters.

"You see we are rather lonely here," said the landlord, "We never have had any attempts made to break in yet, but it's always as well to be on the safe side. When nobody is sleeping here, I am the only man in the house. My wife and daughter are timid, and the servant-girl takes after her missusses. Another glass of ale before you turn in? No! Well, how such a sober man as you come to be out of a place is more than I can make out, for one. Here's where you're to sleep. You're our only lodger tonight, and I think you'll say my missus has done her best to make you comfortable. You're quite sure you won't have another glass of ale? Very well. Good-night."

It was half-past eleven by the clock in the passage as they went upstairs to the bedroom, the window of which looked on to the wood at the back of the house.

Isaac locked the door, set his candle on the chest of drawers, and wearily got ready for bed. The bleak autumn wind was still blowing, and the solemn, monotonous, surging moan of it in the wood was dreary and awful to hear through the night-silence. Isaac felt strangely wakeful. He resolved, as he lay down in bed, to keep the candle alight until he began to grow sleepy, for there was something unendurably depressing in the bare idea of lying awake in the darkness, listening to the dismal, ceaseless moaning of the wind in the wood.

Sleep stole on him before he was aware of it. His eyes closed, and he fell off insensibly to rest without having so much as thought of extinguishing the candle.

The first sensation of which he was conscious, after sinking into slumber was a strange shivering that ran through him suddenly from head to foot, and a dreadful sinking pain at the heart, such as he had never felt before. The shivering only disturbed his slumbers; the pain woke him instantly. In one moment he passed from a state of sleep to a state of wakefulness—his eyes wide open—his mental perceptions cleared on a sudden as if by a miracle.

The candle had burned down nearly to the last morsel of tallow, but the top of the unsnuffed wick had just fallen off, and the light in the little room was, for the moment, fair and full.

Between the foot of the bed and the closed door there stood a woman with a knife in her hand, looking at him.

He was stricken speechless with terror, but he did not lose the preternatural clearness of his faculties, and he never took his eyes off the woman. She said not a word as they stared each other in the face, but she began to move slowly toward the left-hand side of the bed.

His eyes followed her. She was a fair, fine woman, with yellowish flaxen hair and light-gray eyes, with a droop in the left eyelid. He noticed those things, and fixed them on his mind before she was round at the side of the bed. Speechless, with no expression in her face, with no noise following her footfall, she came closer and closer—stopped and slowly raised the knife. He laid his right arm over his throat to save it; but, as he saw the knife coming down, threw his hand across the bed to the right side, and jerked his body

over that way just as the knife descended on the mattress within an inch of his shoulder.

His eyes fixed on her arm and hand as she slowly drew her knife out of the bed; a white, well-shaped arm, with a pretty down lying lightly over the fair skin—a delicate lady's hand; with the crowning beauty of a pink flush under and around the finger nails.

She drew the knife out, and passed slowly to the foot of the bed; stopped there for a moment looking at him; then came on—still speechless, still with no expression on the blank, beautiful face, still with no sound following the stealthy footfalls—came on to the right side of the bed where he now lay.

As she aproached, she raised the knife again, and he drew himself away to the left side. She struck, as before, right into the mattress, with a deliberate, perpendicularly downward action of the arm. This time his eyes wandered from her to the knife. It was like the large clasp-knives which he had often seen laboring men use to cut their bread and bacon with. Her delicate little fingers did not conceal more than two-thirds of the handle; he noticed that it was made of buckhorn, clean and shining the blade was, and looking like new.

For a second time she drew the knife out, concealed it in the wide sleeve of her gown, then stopped by the bedside, watching him. For an instant he saw her standing in that position, then the wick of the spent candle fell over into the socket, the flame diminished to a little blue point, and the room grew dark.

A moment, or less, if possible, passed so, and then the wick flamed up, smokingly, for the last time. His eyes were still looking eagerly over the right-hand side of the bed when the final flash of light came, but they discerned nothing. The fair woman with the knife was gone.

The conviction that he was alone again weakened the hold of the terror that had struck him dumb up to this time. The preternatural sharpness which the very intensity of his panic had mysteriously imparted to his faculties left them suddenly. His brain grew confused—his heart beat wildly—his ears opened for the first time since the appearance of the woman to a sense of the woeful, ceaseless moaning of the wind among the trees. With the dreadful conviction of the reality of what he had seen still strong within him, he leaped out of bed, and screaming, "Murder! Wake up there! wake up!" dashed headlong through the darkness to the door.

It was fast locked, exactly as he had left it on going to bed.

His cries on starting up had alarmed the house. He heard the terrified, confused exclamations of women; he saw the master of the house approaching along the passage with his burning rush-candle in one hand and his gun in the other.

"What is it?" asked the landlord, breathlessly.

Isaac could only answer in a whisper. "A woman, with a knife in her hand," he gasped out. "In my room—a fair, yellow-haired woman; she jabbed at me with the knife twice over."

The landlord's pale cheeks grew paler. He looked at Isaac eagerly by the flickering light of his candle, and his

face began to get red again; his voice altered, too, as well as his complexion.

"She seems to have missed you twice," he said.

"I dodged the knife as it came down," Isaac went on, in the same scared whisper. "It struck the bed each time."

The landlord took his candle into the bedroom immediately. In less than a minute he came out again into the passage in a violent passion.

"The devil fly away with you and your woman with the knife! There isn't a mark in the bedclothes anywhere. What do you mean by coming into a man's place, and frightening his family out of their wits about a dream?"

"I'll leave your house," said Isaac faintly. "Better out on the road, in rain and dark, on my road home, than back again in that room, after what I've seen in it. Lend me a light to get my clothes by, and tell me what I'm to pay."

"Pay!" cried the landlord, leading the way with his light sulkily into the bedroom. "You'll find your score on the slate when you go downstairs. I wouldn't have taken you in for all the money you've got about you if I'd known your dreaming, screeching ways beforehand. Look at the bed. Where's the cut of a knife in it? Look at the window—is the lock bursted? Look at the door (which I heard you fasten yourself)—is it broke in? A murdering woman with a knife in my house! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

Isaac answered not a word. He huddled on his clothes, and they went downstairs together.

Nigh on twenty minutes past two!" said the landlord, as they passed a clock. "A nice time in the morning to frighten honest people out of their wits!"

Isaac paid his bill, and the landlord let him out at the front door, asking, with a grin of contempt, as he undid the strong fastenings, whether "the murdering woman got in that way?"

They parted without a word on either side. The rain had ceased, but the night was dark, and the wind bleaker than ever. Little did the darkness or the cold or the uncertainty about the way home matter to Isaac. If he had been turned out into the wilderness in a thunderstorm, it would have been a relief after what he had suffered in the bedroom of the inn.

What was the fair woman with the knife? The creature of a dream, or that other creature from the unknown world called among men by the name of ghosts? He could make nothing of the mystery—had made nothing of it, even when it was midday on Wednesday, and when he stood, at last, after many times missing his road, once more on the doorstep of home.

His mother came out eagerly to receive him. His face told her in a moment that something was wrong.

"I've lost the place; but that's my luck. I dreamed an ill dream last night, mother—or maybe I saw a ghost. Take it either way, it scared me out of my senses, and I am not my own man again yet."

"Isaac, your face frightens me. Come in to the fire—come in, and tell mother all about it."

He was as anxious to tell as she was to hear; for it had been his hope, all the way home, that his mother, with her quicker capacity and superior knowledge, might be able to throw some light

on the mystery which he could not clear up for himself. His memory of the dream was still mechanically vivid, though his thoughts were entirely confused by it.

His mother's face grew paler and paler as he went on. She never interrupted him by so much as a single word; but when he had done, she moved her chair close to his, put her arms around his neck, and said to him:

"Isaac, you dreamed your ill dream on this Wednesday morning. What time was it when you saw the fair woman with a knife in her hand?"

Isaac reflected on what the landlord had said when they had passed by the clock on his leaving the inn; allowed as nearly as he could for the time that must have elapsed between the unlocking of his bedroom door and the paying of his bill just before going away, and answered:

"Somewhere about two o'clock in the morning."

His mother suddenly quitted her hold of his neck, and struck her hands together with a gesture of despair.

"This Wednesday is your birthday, Isaac, and two o'clock in the morning was the time when you were born."

Isaac's capacities were not quick enough to catch the infection of his mother's superstitious dread. He was amazed, and a little startled also, when she suddenly rose from her chair, opened her old writing-desk, took pen, ink, and paper, and then said to him:

"Your memory is but a poor one, Isaac, and now I'm an old woman mine's not much better. I want all about this dream of yours to be as well known to both of us, years hence, as it is now. Tell me over again all you told me a minute ago, when you spoke of what the woman with the knife looked like."

Isaac obeyed, and marveled much as he saw his mother carefully set down on paper the very words that he was saying.

"Light-gray eyes," she wrote, as they came to the descriptive part, "with a droop in the left eyelid; flaxen hair, with a gold-yellow streak in it; white arms, with a down upon them; little lady's hand, with a reddish look about the finger nails; clasp-knife with a buckhorn handle, that seemed as good as new." To these particulars Mrs. Scatchard added the year, month, day of week, and time in the morning when the woman of the dream appeared to her son. She then locked up the paper carefully in the writing-desk.

Neither on that day nor on any day after could her son induce her to return to the matter of the dream. She obstinately kept her thoughts about it to herself, and even refused to refer again to the paper in her writing-desk. Ere long Isaac grew weary of attempting to make her break her resolute silence; and time, which sooner or later wears out all things, gradually wore out the impression produced on him by the dream. He began by thinking of it carelessly, and he ended by not thinking of it at all.

The result was the more easily brought about by the advent of some important changes for the better in his prospects, which commenced not long after his terrible night's experience at the inn. He reaped at last the reward of his long and patient suffering under adversity by getting an excellent place, keeping it for seven years, and leaving it, on the death of his master, not only

with an excellent character, but also with a comfortable annuity bequeathed to him as a reward for saving his mistress's life in a carriage accident. Thus it happened that Isaac Scatchard returned to his old mother, seven years after the time of the dream at the inn, with an annual sum of money at his disposal sufficient to keep them both in ease and independence for the rest of their lives.

The mother, whose health had been bad of late years, profited so much by the care bestowed on her and by freedom from money anxieties, that when Isaac's birthday came round she was able to sit up comfortably at table and dine with him.

On that day, as the evening drew on, Mrs. Scatchard discovered that a bottle of tonic medicine which she was accustomed to take, and in which she had fancied that a dose or more was still left, happened to be empty. Isaac immediately volunteered to go to the chemist's and get it filled again. It was as rainy and bleak an autumn night as on the memorable past occasion when he lost his way and slept at the roadside inn.

On going into the chemist's shop he was passed hurriedly by a poorly dressed woman coming out of it. The glimpse he had of her face struck him, and he looked back after her as she descended the doorsteps.

"You're noticing that woman?" said the chemist's apprentice behind the counter. "It's my opinion there's something wrong with her. She's been asking for laudanum to put to a bad tooth. Master's out for half an hour, and I told her I wasn't allowed to sell poison to strangers in his absence. She laughed in a queer way, and said she would come back in half an hour. If she expects master to serve her, I think she'll be disappointed. It's a case of suicide, sir, if ever there was one yet."

These words added immeasurably to the sudden interest in the woman, which Isaac had felt at the first sight of her face. After he had got the medicine-bottle filled, he looked about anxiously for her as soon as he was out in the street. She was walking slowly up and down on the opposite side of the road. With his heart, very much to his own surprise, beating fast, Isaac crossed over and spoke to her.

He asked if she was in any distress. She pointed to her torn shawl, her scanty dress, her crushed, dirty bonnet; then moved under a lamp so as to let the light fall on her stern, pale, but still most beautiful face.

"I look like a comfortable, happy woman, don't I?" she said, with a bitter laugh.

She spoke with a purity of intonation which Isaac had never heard before from other lips than ladies' lips. Her slightest action seemed to have the easy, negligent grace of a thoroughbred woman, Her skin, for all its poverty-stricken paleness, was as delicate as if her life had been passed in the enjoyment of every social comfort that wealth can purchase. Even her small, finely shaped hands, gloveless as they were, had not lost their whiteness.

Little by little, in answer to his question, the sad story of the woman came out. There is no need to relate it here; it is told over and over again in police reports and paragraphs about attempted suicides.

"My name is Rebecca Murdoch," said

the woman, as she ended. "I have ninepence left, and I thought of spending it at the chemist's over the way in securing a passage to the other world. Whatever it is, it can't be worse to me than this, so why should I stop here?"

Besides the natural compassion and sadness moved in his heart by what he heard, Isaac felt within him some mysterious influence at work all the time the woman was speaking which utterly confused his ideas and almost deprived him of his powers of speech. All that he could say in answer to her last reckless words was that he would prevent her from attempting her own life, if he followed her about all night to do it. His rough, trembling earnestness seemed to impress her.

"I won't occasion you that trouble," she answered, when he repeated his threat. "You have given me a fancy for living by speaking kindly to me. No need for the mockery of protestations and promises. You may believe me without them. Come to Fuller's Meadow tomorrow at twelve, and you will find me alive, to answer for myself—No!—no money. My ninepence will do to get me as good a night's lodging as I want."

She nodded and left him. He made no attempt to follow—he felt no suspicion that she was deceiving him.

"It's strange, but I can't help believing her," he said to himself, and walked away, bewildered, toward home.

On entering the house his mind was still so completely absorbed by its new subject of interest that he took no notice of what his mother was doing when he came in with the bottle of medicine. She had opened her old writing-desk in his absence. and was now reading a paper attentively that lay inside it. On every birthday of Isaac's since she had written down the particulars of his dream from his own lips, she had been accustomed to read that same paper, and ponder over it in private.

The next day he went to Fuller's Meadow.

He had done only right in believing her so implicitly. She was there, punctual to a minute, to answer for herself. The last-left faint defenses in Isaac's heart against the fascination which a word or look from her began inscrutably to exercise over him sank down and vanished before her forever on that memorable morning.

When a man previously insensible to the influence of woman forms an attachment in middle life, the instances are rare indeed, let the warning circumstances be what they may, in which he is found capable of freeing himself from the tyranny of the new ruling passion. The charm of being spoken to familiarly, fondly, and gratefully by a woman whose language and manners still retained enough of their early refinement to hint at the high social station that she had lost, would have been a dangerous luxury to a man of Isaac's rank at the age of twenty. But it was far more than that—it was certain ruin to him—now that his heart was opening unworthily to a new influence at that middle time of life when strong feelings of all kinds, once implanted, strike root most stubbornly in a man's moral nature. A few more stolen interviews after that first morning in Fuller's Meadow completed his infatuation. In less than a month from the time when he first met her, Isaac Scatchard had consented to give Rebecca Murdoch a

new interest in existence and a chance of recovering the character she had lost by promising to make her his wife.

She had taken possession, not of his passions only, but of his faculties as well. All the mind he had he put into her keeping. She directed him on every point—even instructing him how to break the news of his approaching marriage in the safest manner to his mother.

"If you tell her how you met me and who I am, at first," said the cunning woman, "she will move heaven and earth to prevent our marriage. Say I am the sister of one of your fellow-servants—ask her to see me before you go into any more particulars—and leave it to me to do the rest. I mean to make her love me next best to you, Isaac, before she knows anything of who I really am."

The motive of the deceit was sufficient to sanctify it to Isaac. The stratagem proposed relieved him of his own great anxiety, and quieted his uneasy conscience on the subject of his mother. Still, there was something wanting to perfect his happiness, something that he could not realize, something mysteriously untraceable, and yet something that perpetually made itself felt; not when he was absent from Rebecca Murdoch, but, strange to say, when he was actually in her presence! She was kindness itself with him. She never made him feel his inferior capacities and inferior manners. She showed the sweetest anxiety to please him in the smallest trifles; but, in spite of all these attractions, he never could feel quite at his ease with her. At their first meeting there had mingled with his admiration, when he looked in her face, a faint, involuntary feeling of doubt whether that face was entirely strange to him. No after-familiarity had the slightest effect on this inexplicable wearisome uncertainty.

Concealing the truth as he had been directed, he announced his marriage engagement precipitately and confusedly to his mother on the day when he contracted it. Poor Mrs. Scatchard showed her perfect confidence in her son by flinging her arms round his neck. and giving him joy of having found at last, in the sister of one of his fellow-servants, a woman to comfort and care for him after his mother was gone. She was all eagerness to see the woman of her son's choice, and the next day was fixed for the introduction.

It was a bright sunny morning. and the little cottage parlor was full of light as Mrs. Scatchard, happy and expectant, dressed for the occasion in her Sunday gown, sat waiting for her son and her future daughter-in-law.

Punctual to the appointed time, Isaac hurriedly and nervously led his promised wife into the room. His mother rose to receive her—advanced a few steps smiling—looked Rebecca full in the eyes, and suddenly stopped. Her face, which had been flushed the moment before, turned white in an instant; her eyes lost their expression of softness and kindness, and assumed a blank look of terror; her out-stretched hands fell to her sides, and she staggered back a few steps with a low cry to her son.

"Isaac," she whispered, clutching him fast by the arm when he asked alarmedly if she was taken ill, "Isaac, does that woman's face remind you of nothing?"

Before he could answer—before he could look round to where Rebecca

stood, astonished and angered by her reception, at the lower end of the room—his mother pointed impatiently to her writing-desk, and gave him the key.

"Open it," she said in a quick, breathless whisper.

"What does this mean? Why am I treated as if I had no business here? Does your mother want to insult me?" asked Rebecca, angrily.

"Open it, and give me the paper in the left hand drawer. Quick! quick for Heaven's sake!" said Mrs. Scatchard, shrinking further back in terror.

Isaac gave her the paper. She looked it over eagerly for a moment, then followed Rebecca, who was now turning away haughtily to leave the room, and caught her by the shoulder—abruptly raised the long, loose sleeve of her gown, and glanced at her hand and arm. Something like fear began to steal over the angry expression of Rebecca's face as she shook herself free from the old woman's grasp. "Mad!" she said to herself, "and Isaac never told me." With these few words she left the room.

Isaac was hastening after her when his mother stopped his further progress. It wrung his heart to see the misery and terror in her face as she looked at him.

"Light-gray eyes," she said, in low, mournful, awe-struck tones, pointing toward the open door: " a droop in the left eyelid; flaxen hair, with a gold-yellow streak in it; white arms, with a down upon them; little lady's hand, with a reddish look under the finger nails—The Dream-Woman, Isaac, the Dream-Woman!"

That faint cleaving doubt which he had never been able to shake off in Rebecca Murdoch's presence was fatally set at rest forever. He had seen her face, then, before—seven years before, on his birthday, in the bedroom of the lonely inn.

"Be warned! oh, my son, be warned! Isaac, Isaac, let her go, and do you stop with me!"

Something darkened the parlor window as these words were said. A sudden chill ran through him, and he glanced sidelong at the shadow. Rebecca Murdoch had come back. She was peering in curiously at them over the low window-blind.

"I have promised to marry, mother," he said, "and marry I must."

The tears came into his eyes as he spoke and dimmed his sight, but he could just discern the fatal face outside moving away again from the window.

His mother's head sank lower.

"Are you faint?" he whispered.

"Broken-hearted, Isaac."

He stooped down and kissed her. The shadow, as he did so, returned to the window, and the fatal face peered in curiously once more.

Three weeks after that day Isaac and Rebecca were man and wife. All that was hopelessly dogged and stubborn in the man's moral nature seemed to have closed round his fatal passion, and to have fixed it unassailably in his heart.

After that first interview in the cottage parlor no consideration would induce Mrs. Scatchard to see her son's wife again, or even to talk to her when Isaac tried hard to plead her cause after their marriage.

This course of conduct was not in any degree occasioned by a discovery of the degradation in which Rebecca had lived. There was no question of that between mother and son. There was no question

of anything but the fearfully exact resemblance between the living, breathing woman and the specter-woman of Isaac's dream.

Rebecca, on her side, neither felt nor expressed the slightest sorrow at the estrangement between herself and her mother-in-law. Isaac, for the sake of peace, had never contradicted her first idea that age and long illness had affected Mrs. Scatchard's mind. He even allowed his wife to upbraid him for not having confessed this to her at the time of their marriage engagement rather than risk anything by hinting at the truth. The sacrifice of his integrity before his one-all-mastering delusion seemed but a small thing, and cost his conscience but little after the sacrifices he had already made.

The time of waking from this delusion—the cruel and the rueful time—was not far off. After some quiet months of married life, as the summer was ending, and the year was getting on toward the month of his birthday, Isaac found his wife altering toward him. She grew sullen and contemptuous; she formed acquaintances of the most dangerous kind in defiance of his objections, his entreaties, and his commands; and, worst of all, she learned, ere long, after every fresh difference with her husband, to seek the deadly self-oblivion of drink. Little by little, after the first miserable discovery that his wife was keeping company with drunkards, the shocking certainty forced itself on Isaac that she had grown to be a drunkard herself.

He had been in a sadly desponding state for some time before the occurrence of these domestic calamities. His mother's health, as he could but too plainly discern every time he went to see her at the cottage, was failing fast, and he upbraided himself in secret as the cause of the bodily and mental suffering she endured. When to his remorse on his mother's account was added the shame and misery occasioned by the discovery of his wife's degradation, he sank under the double trial—his face began to alter fast, and he looked what he was, a spirit-broken man.

His mother, still struggling bravely against the illness that was hurrying her to the grave, was the first to notice the sad alteration in him, and the first to hear of his last worst trouble with his wife. She could only weep bitterly on the day when he made his humiliating confession, but on the next occasion when he went to see her she had taken a resolution in reference to his domestic afflictions which astonished and even alarmed him. He found her dressed to go out, and on asking the reason, received this answer:

"I am not long for this world, Isaac," she said, "and I shall not feel easy on my deathbed unless I have done my best to the last to make my son happy. I mean to put my own fears and my own feelings out of the question, and to go with you to your wife, and try what I can do to reclaim her. Give me your arm, Isaac, and let me do the last thing I can in this world to help my son before it is too late."

He could not disobey her, and they walked together slowly toward his miserable home.

It was only one o'clock in the afternoon when they reached the cottage where he lived. It was their dinner-hour, and Rebecca was in the kitchen

He was thus able to take his mother quietly into the parlor, and then prepare his wife for the interview. She had fortunately drunk but little at that early hour, and she was less sullen and capricious than usual.

He returned to his mother with his mind tolerably at ease. His wife soon followed him into the parlor, and the meeting between her and Mrs. Scatchard passed off better than he had ventured to anticipate, though he observed with secret apprehension that his mother, resolutely as she controlled herself in other respects, could not look at his wife in the face when she spoke to her. It was a relief to him, therefore, when Rebecca began to lay the cloth.

She laid the cloth, brought in the bread-tray, and cut a slice from the loaf for her husband, then returned to the kitchen. At that moment, Isaac, still anxiously watching his mother, was startled by seeing the same ghastly change pass over her face which had altered it so awfully on the morning when Rebecca and she first met. Before he could say a word, she whispered, with a look of horror:

"Take me back—home, home again, Isaac. Come with me, and never go back again."

He was afraid to ask for an explanation; he could only sign to her to be silent, and help her quickly to the door. As they passed the bread-tray on the table she stopped and pointed to it.

"Did you see what your wife cut your bread with?" she asked, in a low whisper.

"No, mother—I was not noticing—what was it?"

"Look."

He did look. A new clasp-knife, with a buckhorn handle, lay with the loaf in the bread-tray. He stretched out his hand shudderingly to possess himself of it; but, at the same time, there was a noise in the kitchen, and his mother caught at his arm.

"The knife of the dream! Isaac, I'm faint with fear. Take me away before she comes back."

He was hardly able to support her. The visible, tangible reality of the knife struck him with a panic, and utterly destroyed any faint doubts that he might have entertained up to this time in relation to the mysterious dream-warning of nearly eight years before. By a last desperate effort, he summoned self-possession enough to help his mother out of the house—so quietly that the "Dream-Woman" (he thought of her by that name now) did not hear them departing from the kitchen.

"Don't go back, Isaac—don't go back!" implored Mrs. Scatchard, as he turned to go away, after seeing her safely seated again in her own room.

"I must get the knife," he answered, under his breath. His mother tried to stop him again, but he hurried out without another word.

On his return he found that his wife had discovered their secret departure from the house. She had been drinking, and was in a fury of passion. The dinner in the kitchen was flung under the grate; the cloth was off the parlor table. Where was the knife?

Unwisely, he asked for it. She was only too glad of the opportunity of irritating him which the request afforded her. He wanted the knife, did he? Could he give her a reason why? No! Then he should not have it—not if he went down on his knees to ask for it.

Further recrimination elicited the fact that she had bought it a bargain, and that she considered it her own especial property. Isaac saw the uselessness of attempting to get the knife by fair means, and determined to search for it later in the day, in secret. The search was unsuccessful. Night came on, and he left the house to walk about the streets. He was afraid now to sleep in the same room with her.

Three weeks passed. Still sullenly enraged with him, she would not give up the knife; and still that fear of sleeping in the same room with her possessed him. He walked about at night, or dozed in the parlor, or sat watching by his mother's bedside. Before the expiration of the first week in the new month his mother died. It wanted then but ten days of her son's birthday. She had longed to live till that anniversary. Isaac was present at her death, and her last words in the world were addressed to him:

"Don't go back, my son, don't go back!"

He was obliged to go back, if it were only to watch his wife. Exasperated to the last degree by his distrust of her, she had revengefully sought to add a sting to his grief, during the last days of his mother's illness, by declaring that she would assert her right to attend the funeral. In spite of all that he could do or say, she held with wicked pertinacity to her word, and on the day appointed for the burial forced herself—inflamed and shameless with drink—into her husband's presence, and declared that she would walk in the funeral procession to his mother's grave.

This last worst outrage, accompanied by all that was most insulting in word and look, maddened him for the moment. He struck her.

The instant the blow was dealt he repented it. She crouched down, silent, in a corner of the room, and eyed him steadily; it was a look that cooled his hot blood and made him tremble. But there was no time now to think of a means of making atonement. Nothing remained but to risk the worst till the funeral was over. There was but one way of making sure of her. He locked her in her bedroom.

When he came back some hours after, he found her sitting, very much altered in looks and bearing, by the bedside, with a bundle on her lap. She rose and faced him quietly, and spoke with a strange stillness in her voice, a strange repose in her eyes, a strange composure in her manner.

"No man has ever struck me twice," she said, "and my husband shall have no second opportunity. Set the door open and let me go. From this day forth we see each other no more."

Before he could answer she passed him and left the room. He saw her walk away up the street.

Would she return?

All that night he watched and waited, but no footsteps came near the house. The next night, overpowered by fatigue, he lay down in his clothes, with the door locked, the key on the table, and the candle burning. His slumber was not disturbed. The third night, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth passed, and nothing happened. He lay down on the seventh, still in his clothes, still with the door locked, the key on the table, and the candle burning, but easier in his mind.

Easier in his mind, and in perfect health of body, he was when he fell off to sleep. But his rest was disturbed. He woke twice without any sensation of uneasiness. But the third time it was that never-to-be-forgotten shivering of the night at the lonely inn, that dreadful sinking pain at the heart, which once more aroused him in an instant.

His eyes opened toward the left-hand side of the bed, and there stood—

The Dream-Woman again? No! his wife; the living reality, with the dream-specter's face, in the dream-specter's attitude; the fair arm up, the knife clasped in the delicate white hand.

He sprang upon her almost at the instant of seeing her, and yet not quickly enough to prevent her from hiding the knife. Without a word from him—without a cry from her—he pinioned her in a chair. With one hand he felt up her sleeve, and there, where the Dream-Woman had hidden the knife, his wife had hidden it—the knife with the buckhorn handle, that looked like new.

In the despair of that fearful moment his brain was steady, his heart was calm. He looked at her fixedly with the knife in his hand, and said these last words:

"You have told me we should see each other no more, and you have come back. It is now my turn to go, and to go forever. I say that we shall see each other no more, and *my* word shall not be broken."

He left her, and set forth into the night. There was a bleak wind abroad, and the smell of recent rain was in the air. The distant church-clock chimed the quarter as he walked rapidly beyond the last houses in the suburb. He asked the first policeman he met what hour that was of which the quarter past had just struck.

The man referred sleepily to his watch, and answered, "Two o'clock." Two in the morning. What day of the month was this day that had just begun? He reckoned it up from the date of his mother's funeral. The fatal parallel was complete: it was his birthday.

Had he escaped the mortal peril which his dream foretold? or had he only received a second warning?

As that ominous doubt forced itself on his mind, he stopped, reflected, and turned back again toward the city. He was still resolute to hold to his word, and never to let her see him more; but there was a thought now in his mind of having her watched and followed. The knife was in his possession; the world was before him; but a new distrust of her—a vague, unspeakable, superstitious dread—had come over him.

"I must know where she goes, now she thinks I have left her," he said to himself, as he stole back wearily to the precincts of his home.

It was still dark. He had left the candle burning in the bed-chamber; but when he looked up to the window of the room now, there was no light in it. He crept cautiously to the house door. On going away, he remembered to have closed it; on trying it now, he found it open.

He waited outside, never losing sight of the house, till daylight. Then he ventured indoors—listened, and heard nothing—looked into kitchen, scullery, parlor, and found nothing; went up, at last, into the bedroom—it was empty.

A picklock lay on the floor, betraying how she had gained entrance in the night, and that was the only trace of her.

Whither had she gone? That no mortal tongue could tell him. The darkness had covered her flight; and when the day broke no man could say where the light found her.

Before leaving the house and the town forever, he gave instructions to a friend and neighbor to sell his furniture for anything that it would fetch, and apply the proceeds to employing the police to trace her. The directions were honestly followed, and the money was all spent, but the inquiries led to nothing. The picklock on the bedroom floor remained the one last useless trace of the Dream Woman.

Senorita Clotilde

In the dressing-room of Clotilde, leading actress of one of the most important theaters in the capital, there gathered every night about half a dozen of her male friends. The reception lasted almost always about as long as the performances; but it included a number of parentheses. Whenever the actress was obliged to change her costume she would turn towards her visitors with a bewitching smile and beseeching eyes:

"Gentlemen, will you withdraw for one little moment?—not more than one little moment."

Thereupon they would all transfer themselves to the anteroom and remain there patiently waiting. No, I am mistaken, not quite all, because the youngest of them, a third-year student in the School of Medicine, would avail himself of the chance to take a turn in the wings to stretch his legs and snatch a fugitive kiss or so. At all events, the majority remained, either seated or pacing up and down, until the moment when Clotilde would re-open her door and, putting out her head, decked as queen or peasant girl, according to the part she was playing, would call out:

"Now you may come back, gentlemen.—Have I been very long?"

Don Jerónimo always lingered. He was the last to withdraw grumbling and the first to return to the dressing-room. He was never able to reconcile himself to that modest custom. And although he never allowed himself to say so openly, yet in the depths of his secret thoughts he regarded it as a lack of courtesy that he should be ejected from his seat, merely because the silly child must change her dress,—he, who for thirty years had passed his life behind the scenes and had been on intimate terms with every actor and actress, ancient and modern!

He was fifty-four years of age and had been attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ever since he was four-and-twenty. Each successive government had regarded him as one of the indispensable wheels in the machinery of colonial administration. Furthermore, he was a bachelor and living at the mercy of his landlady. It was said that in his youth he once wrote a play which won him nothing but hisses and free entry for life behind the scenes of the theaters. Whether resigned or not to the verdict of the public, he ceased to write plays and assumed instead the nobler rôle of patron to unrecognized authors and artists and to ruined managers.

Any youth from the provinces who arrived in Madrid with a drama in his pocket could take no surer road to seeing it produced than that which led to the home of Don Jerónimo. One and all, he received them with open arms, the good and the bad alike. There is no denying that, since he was rather brusque in his ways, he never spared the young authors who asked his advice and read him their productions, but—criticised vigorously, even to the verge of insult: "This whole episode is sheer nonsense; spill your ink-well on it!"—

"Why, look here, for the love of heaven! How do you suppose that a man who is on the point of committing murder is going to stand there for sixteen seconds, without drawing his breath?"—"Lord, what tommyrot! Platonic love for a woman of that class! You must have tumbled out of the nest unfledged, my lad!"

But anyone possessed of a little tact refused to take offense, but went calmly on and ended by intrusting his manuscript to the hands of Don Jerónimo. And he could rest assured that his drama would be produced. The veteran of the greenrooms exercised a strong influence, akin to intimidation, over managers and actors alike; when he was displeased, he gave his tongue free rein; if a play had been hissed, he would protest, boiling with rage, against the public verdict, and would continue to support the author more stanchly than ever. If on the contrary it scored a hit, he merely kept silent and smiled ecstatically, but never sought out the successful author in order to congratulate him. And if the latter should complain of his indifference, his answer was:

"Now that you have shown that you can use your wings, will you please, my friend, will you please leave me free to succor some other poor fellow?"

His private life offered little of special interest. Every night, upon leaving the theater, he betook himself to the *Café Habanero,* where he habitually consumed a beef-steak, together with a small measure of beer. And according to a certain friend, who had watched him repeatedly, he always managed his repast so artfully as to finish, at one and the same time, the last mouthful of meat, the last fragment of bread, and the last draught of beer.

On this particular night the little gathering was unwontedly animated. The actress's friends indulged more freely than usual in gossip and laughter. Don Jerónimo, muffled closely in his cape (one of his privileges), lounging at ease in the big corner chair, and with his inevitable cigar between his teeth (another special privilege), was giving utterance to rare and racy stories, which from time to time caused his hearers to cast a glance in the direction of Clotilde and brought a slightly heightened color to the latter's cheek.

Don Jerónimo himself took no notice of this; he had first known her as such a mere child that he considered he had the right to dispense with certain courtesies that are due to ladies,—assuming that in the whole course of his life he had ever shown them to any woman which is very doubtful. He had met her first as a mere child and had opened the way for her to the stage. At the time that he ran across her, she was living wretchedly and trying to learn the art of making artificial flowers. Today, thanks to her talent, she earned enough to keep her mother and sisters in comfort.

Clotilde's attraction lay in her charm of manner rather than her beauty. Her complexion was olive, her eyes large and black, the best of all her features; her mouth somewhat big, but with bright red lips and admirably even teeth. Tonight she was costumed as a lady of the time of Louis XV, with powdered hair, which was marvelously becoming to her. She took almost no part in the conversation, but seemed satisfied to be merely a listener, constantly turning her serene

gaze from one speaker to another, and often answering only with a smile when they addressed her.

All at once there came the voice of the call-boy:

"Señorita Clotilde, if you please——"

"Coming," she answered, rising.

She crossed over to the mirror, gave a few final touches to her brows and lashes with a pencil, adjusted with somewhat nervous fingers the coils of her hair, the cross of brilliants which she wore at her throat, and the folds of her dress. Her friends became for the moment silent and abstractedly watched these last preparations.

"Good-by for the present, gentlemen." And she left the dressing-room, followed by her maid, carefully bearing her train, a magnificent train of cream-colored satin.

"She grows lovelier every day, Clotilde does," said the medical student, allowing an imperceptible sigh to escape him.

Don Jerónimo took an enormous pull at his cigar, and instantly became enveloped in a cloud of smoke. For this reason no one observed the smile of triumph with which he received the medical student's remark.

"I agree with you that she grows prettier every day," said another of the visitors. "But it seems to me that her disposition has been undergoing a big change for some time back. You, my boy, have not known her as long as we have. She used to be a fascinating talker, so merry, so full of spirits! No one could ever remain out of temper in her company. But now I find her grave and sad almost all the time."

"It's a fact that I have wondered at the melancholy look in her eyes."

Don Jerónimo took another enormous pull at his cigar. No one saw the swift flare of anger that passed over his face.

"Changes like that, my boy, have only one cause, and that is, love."

"Was she engaged?"

"Precisely,—Don Jerónimo knows the story well."

"Yes, and I am going to tell it to you," said the one referred to, from the depths of his cloak. "Though you may believe me that it is no pleasant task to relate such follies. But it concerns a girl whom we all of us love, and whatever affects her ought to interest us.

"Some three years ago a young man, faultlessly dressed and with the manuscript of a play under his arm, called upon the director of this theater. Now there is nothing in the world more impressive and awe-inspiring than a well-dressed young man who carries the manuscript of a play under his arm. The director did his best to dodge him, and held him off with a number of adroit moves; but he was finally cornered, all the same. In other words, the young man invited him to breakfast one day, enticing him with the seductive prospect of several dozen oysters, washed down with abundant Sauterne, and for dessert he shot off his play at close range.

"As it turned out, the play was no good. Pepe did what you know one does in such cases: he expressed deep admiration for the versification, he said 'bravo!' over certain obscurely phrased thoughts, and finally he recommended a few changes in the second act, after which the work would be unexceptionable.

"The unwary poet returned home greatly pleased, and set to work zealously upon the revision. At the end

of a fortnight he returned for another interview with Pepe; this time the latter found the first act somewhat slow, and advised him at any cost to put more action into it and make it somewhat shorter. It took the poet a month to rewrite the first act. When he once more presented himself, the director, while still expressing great admiration for the excellence of the verse and for some of the ideas, manifested some doubt as to whether the play was *actable*. That it was *literary*, he had none whatever; on the contrary, it seemed to him that from this point of view it compared favorably with the best of Ayala's plays,—but actable, really actable, ah! that was another matter!"

"What is the difference, Don Jerónimo? I don't understand."

"Then I will explain, my boy. We, who are behind the scenes, mean by *actable* a good play, and by *literary* a bad one."

"I see!"

"After expressing these doubts, the manager concluded by recommending certain additional alterations in the third act.

"At last the poet understood,—a really marvelous occurrence, because poets, who understand everything else and can tell you why the condor flies so high, who soar to the skies and descend into the abyss and penetrate the secret thoughts of all created things, are not capable of realizing that there are times when their works do not please those who hear them. Our young man, whom we will call Inocencio, received back his manuscript somewhat peevishly, and for a while nothing further was heard of him. But at last, doubtless after a good deal of profound meditation he presented himself on a certain morning at the home of Clotilde. I hardly need tell you that he carried his manuscript under his arm.

"He waited patiently in the parlor while our young friend completed her toilet, and when at last she made her appearance, she saw before her a blushing and confused young man, who nevertheless was pleasant-mannered and fashionably dressed, and who besought with stammering lips that she would do him the favor of listening while he read his play. Women, you must know, find a singular pleasure in playing the rôle of patroness, especially in regard to young men of pleasant manners and fashionable dress. So that it is not at all surprising that Clotilde listened patiently to the play and even pronounced it acceptable.

"The young man intrusted himself wholly to her guidance, deposited his manuscript in her pretty hands, as though it were a new-born child, and she received it like a doting mother, took it under her protection, and promised to watch over its precious existence and introduce it to the world. The young man declared that such an intention was worthy of the noble heart whose fame had already reached his ears. Clotilde replied that it was no kindness on her part to work to have the play produced, but only an act of justice. The young man said that this idea was exceedingly flattering, because Clotilde's great talent and the accuracy of her judgments were well known to everyone, but that he dared not build upon such an illusion. Clotilde declared that there were many unmerited reputations in the world, and one of them was hers, but that on this

occasion she felt that she was on firm ground.

"The young man replied that when the river roars the water toils, and that when the whole world unites in admiring not only the exceptional beauty and artistic inspiration of a certain person, but also her splendid genius and brilliant intellect, it was necessary to bow one's head. Clotilde said that on this occasion she refused to bow hers, because she was quite convinced that the world was greatly mistaken regarding what it called her talent, which was nothing more nor less than pure instinct. The young man cried out to heaven against such mystification, for which there was absolutely no excuse. Then, promptly calming down, he declared himself profoundly moved by the modesty of his patroness, and swore by all the saints in heaven that he never had met her equal,—with the result that the manuscript was momentarily gaining ground in the heart of our sympathetic friend, and that the young man, overwhelmed with emotion, took his leave of her until the following day.

"On the following day, Clotilde called upon the manager, and by threatening to break her contract, forced from him a promise to produce Inocencio's play as soon as possible. That same afternoon, the poet expressed his thanks to his patroness and promptly took her into his confidence. He belonged to a distinguished provincial family, although without great financial resources. It was in the hope of bettering them that he had come to Madrid, relying solely upon his genius. In his native town they said that he had talent, and that if the verses which he had contributed to the *Tagus Echo* had been published in Madrid, he would be talked of as a second Nuñez de Arce y Grilo. He did not know whether that was so; but he felt that his heart was full of noble sentiments, and he loved the theater better than the apple of his eye. Would he succeed in being an Ayala or a Tamayo? Would he be rejected by the public? It was an insoluble mystery to him.

"During this interview, Clotilde became convinced of two very important things: namely, that Inocencio possessed a talent so great that his head could scarcely hold it, and secondly, that there was no one else in all Madrid who could wear so conspicuous a necktie with such charming effect. I need not tell you that their confidential interviews increased in frequency, and that consequently Clotilde came day by day more completely under the fascinating influence of that supernatural necktie. In the end, she yielded herself vanquished, and surrendered herself to it, bound hand and foot. The necktie deigned to raise her from the ground and grant her the favor of its affection."

"What about a necktie?" asked one of the company, who had been nodding.

Don Jerónimo took an immense, an infernal pull at his cigar, in testimony of his annoyance, then proceeded with no further notice:

"Meanwhile the rehearsals of Inocencio's play had begun. It was called, if I am not mistaken, *Stooping to Conquer*,—excuse me, no, I believe it was just the reverse, *Conquering to Stoop*. Well, at all events, it contained a participle and an infinite. Before long I became aware that lover-like relations had been established between our fair friend and the author, and since, as a

matter of fact, even if Inocencio was a bad poet, as Pepe insisted, he seemed like a good lad, I was very glad it had happened and I helped it along as much as I could. Clotilde confided in me, and declared that she was desperately in love; that her ambitions no longer had anything to do with the art of the stage, which seemed to her an unbearable slavery; that her ideal was to live tranquilly, even if it were in a garret, united to the man whom she adored; that woman was born to be the guardian angel of the fireside, and not to divert the public, and that she herself would rather be queen of a humble little apartment, illuminated with love, than to receive all the applause in the world. In short, gentlemen, our young friend was living in the midst of an idyllic dream.

"Inocencio was, to all appearance, no less in love than she. I frequently encountered them walking through the unfrequented by-paths of the Retiro, at a respectable distance from her mother, who lingered opportunely to examine the first opening buds of flowers or some curious insect. Mothers, at this critical period of courtship, are under an obligation to be admirers of the works of nature. The young pair of turtle-doves would pause when they caught sight of me and greet me, blushingly. I cannot conceal from you that, however much I felt the loss to art, I was delighted that Clotilde was going to be married. A woman always needs the protection of a man. And there is no question that so far as outward appearance went, they were worthy of one another. Inocencio certainly was a most attractive young fellow.

"At the theater they talked of nothing else than of this wedding, which was still in the bud. Everybody was delighted, because Clotilde is the only actress, since the beginning of the world, who took it into her head to attempt what until now was regarded as impossible, to make herself beloved by her companions.

"I observed, nevertheless,—for you know that I am an observant person: it is the one quality that I possess, that of observation, a thing to which the authors of today attach no importance. Today, in the drama, everything is so much dried leaves, a lot of moonshine, which they let filter down through the foliage of the trees, a lot of description of dawn and twilight, and a lot of other similar pastry-shop stuff. That's all there is to it! When any fledgling author comes to me with nonsense of that sort, I say to him: 'Get down to the facts! Get down to the facts!' The facts are the drama, which doesn't exist in the great part of the above-mentioned."

"Aren't you exciting yourself, Don Jerónimo?"

"Well, as I was telling you, I observed that as the rehearsals progressed the ascendency of Inocencio over our young friend increased. The tone in which he addressed her was no longer the humble and courteous tone of earlier days; he corrected her frequently in her manner of delivery, he dictated the attitudes and gestures which she should adopt, and sometimes, when the actress did not quite understand his wishes, he allowed himself to address her publicly in rather severe terms, and the way he looked at her was severer still. Our poet was already thundering and lightning like a true lord and master.

"Clotilde accepted it with good grace.

She, who had always been so haughty, even towards the most distinguished authors, stretched out and shrank back like soft wax in the hands of that insignificant jackanapes. You ought to have seen the humility with which she accepted his suggestions, and the distress which his censures caused her. All the time that the rehearsal lasted she kept her eyes steadily fixed upon him, watching like a submissive slave to catch the wishes of her master. The poet, lolling at ease in an arm-chair, with a brazier of hot coals before him, directed the action in as dictatorial a manner as either Gracia Gutierrez or Ayala could have done. A mere glance from him sufficed to make Clotilde flush crimson or turn pale. The other actors made no protest, out of consideration for her. When she had finished her scene she came eagerly to take her seat beside her betrothed, who sometimes deigned to welcome her with a haughty smile, and at other times with an Olympian indifference. I, meanwhile, looked on, scandalized.

"On one occasion I came upon them from behind, and overheard what they were saying. Clotilde was speaking, and hotly maintaining that Inocencio's *Stooping to Conquer* or *Conquering to Stoop* was better than *A New Drama*. The young man protested feebly. On another occasion they were speaking of their future union. Clotilde was picturing in impassioned phrases the nook to which they would go to hide their happiness; some lofty spot on the hills of Salamanca, a dear little nest, bathed in sunlight, where Inocencio could work in his private study, writing plays, while she sat by his side and embroidered in absolute silence. When he was tired they could talk for a while, to let him rest, and then she would give him a kiss and go back again to her work. In the evening they would go out, arm in arm, to take a short walk, and then home again. But no more of the theater; she abhorred it with all her soul. In the spring they would go every morning to take a walk in the Retiro and take chocolate under the trees; in the summer they would spend a month or two in Inocencio's birthplace, so as to bring back from the country a supply of good color and health for the coming winter.

"The description of this tender idyl, which, even if I am a confirmed bachelor, set my heart beating within my breast, produced no other effect upon the new author than an insolent somnolence which would not disappear until he suddenly raised his imperious voice to admonish some one of the actors.

"At last the opening night arrived. We were all anxious to see the result. The prevailing opinion was that the play offered little novelty; but since Clotilde had staked her whole soul upon the outcome, a big success was predicted. At the dress rehearsal our young friend had achieved genuine prodigies. There was a moment when the few of us whom curiosity had brought to witness it, rose to our feet electrified, convulsed, making a most unseemly outcry. You have no conception how marvelously she rendered her part. Then and there, all of a sudden, an idea entered my head. Recalling all my observations of Clotilde's love affair, I felt convinced, in view of the evidence, that Inocencio had had no other purpose in winning her love than to assure an exceptional interpretation

of the leading *rôle* of his play, and a flattering outcome of his venture. I decided not to communicate my suspicions to anyone. I kept silent and hoped, but there is no doubt that from that time on the young man was decidedly out of favor with me.

"The noise which Inocencio's friends had been making in regard to the theme of his play, the fact that Clotilde had chosen it for her benefit performance, and the wide-spread rumor that the celebrated actress was going to win a signal triumph in it, all worked together to help the speculators to dispose of every seat in the house at fabulous prices. I know a marquis who paid eleven *duros* for two orchestra stalls. This room where we are now sitting was filled, just as it is annually, with flowers and presents; it was impossible to move about in the midst of such a conglomeration of porcelain, books with costly bindings, ebony work-boxes, picture-frames, and no end of other fancy trifles.

"The audience room was unusually brilliant. The most resplendent ladies, the men most distinguished in politics, literature, and finance; in short, the *high life*, as the phrase goes, was all there. But even more brilliant and more radiant was Inocencio himself; radiant with glory and happiness, and graciously receiving the crowds of visitors who came to see the presents, dictating orders to the call-boys and scene-shifters regarding the proper setting of the scene, and multiplying his smiles and hand-shakings to the point of infinity. Clotilde also seemed more beautiful than ever, and her expressive face revealed the tender emotion which possessed her, as well as her deep anxiety to win laurels for her future husband.

"The curtain arose and everyone hurried to occupy his seat. In the wings there was no one save the author and three or four of his friends. The opening scenes were received as usual with indifference; the following ones with a little more cordiality; the versification was fluent and polished, and, as you know, the public appreciates sugar-coated phrases. At last the moment arrived for Clotilde's entrance, and a faint murmur of curiosity and expectation ran through the audience. She spoke her lines discreetly, but without much warmth; it was easy to see that she was afraid. The curtain fell in a dead silence.

"Immediately the waiting-room and passageway were filled by Inocencio's friends, who came eagerly to tell him that this first performance of his play was a great success,—but what was the matter with Clotilde? She hardly put any movement into her part,—and she was usually so much alive, so tremendously forceful! Our young friend acknowledged that, as a matter of fact, she had felt badly scared, and that this had hampered her seriously. The author, greatly alarmed for the fate of his work, endeavored to persuade her that there was nothing to be afraid of, that all she had to do was to be herself, and that she was not to think of him at all while she spoke her lines.

"'I can't help it,' insisted Clotilde, 'all the time that I am speaking I keep thinking that you are the author, and imagining that the play is not going to succeed, and it makes me so frightened.'

"Inocencio was in despair; he tried entreaties, advice, arguments, he em-

braced her without caring who saw him; he tried to infuse courage into her by appealing to her vanity as an artist; in short, he did everything imaginable to save his play.

"The second act began. Clotilde had a few pathetic scenes. In the beginning there was a certain slight disturbance in the audience, and this sufficed to disconcert her completely, and to make her acting irremediably bad, worse than she had ever acted in her whole life. A good deal of coughing was heard, and some loud murmurs of impatience. At the end of that second act a few indiscreet friends tried to applaud, but the audience drowned them out with an immense and terrifying series of hisses. The author, who was standing by my side, pale as death, relieved his feelings with a flood of coarse words, and made his way to Pepe's room, which faces that of Clotilde, and where his friends consoled him, casting the whole blame for the failure upon her, and inflaming more and more the anger surging in his heart. Meanwhile, our poor friend was utterly crushed and overcome, and continually calling for her Inocencio. In order to spare her further trouble, I told her that the author had accepted the situation resignedly, and had left the theater to get a breath of air. The unhappy girl bitterly blamed herself, taking the entire failure on her own shoulders.

"The curtain rose for the third act; and we all gathered anxiously at the wings. Clotilde, by a powerful effort of will, showed herself at first more self-possessed than in the previous acts; but the audience was in a mood to have some sport, and nothing could have made them take the play seriously. When the public once scents a trail, it is like a wild beast that smells blood; there is no way of heading it off, and you have got to let it have its flesh at any cost. And there is no doubt that on this occasion it gorged itself full. Coughs, laughter, sneezes, stampings, hisses,—there was a little of everything. Tears sprang to our poor friend's eyes, and she seemed upon the point of fainting. When the curtain finally fell her eyes sought on all sides for her lover, but he had disappeared. In her dressing-room, where I followed her, she sobbed, groaned, gave way to despair called herself a fool, said that she was going to hire herself out on some farm to tend the geese and more to the same effect. It cost me some hard work to calm her down, but at last I succeeded so that she sank into a sort of silent lethargy. In the sorrow which her eyes revealed I saw that what tormented her horribly was the absence of Inocencio.

"The door of the room was suddenly flung open. The defeated poet made his appearance; he was quite pale, but apparently calm. Nevertheless, I perceived at the first glance that his calmness was assumed, and that the smile which contracted his lips closely resembled that of a condemned man who wishes to die bravely.

"A gleam of joy illuminated Clotilde's face. She rose swiftly and flung her arms around his neck, saying in a broken voice:

" 'I have ruined you, my poor Inocencio, I have ruined you! How generous you are! But listen, I swear to you, by the memory of my father, that I will atone for the humiliation you have just suffered.'

" 'There is no need for you to atone.

my dear girl,' replied the poet, in a soft tone under which a disdainful anger could be felt, 'my family has not achieved its illustrious name through the intercession of any actor. From this day henceforth I gladly renounce the theater and all that is connected with it. Accordingly,—I wish you good-day.' And, unclasping the arms that imprisoned his neck, and smiling sarcastically, he retreated a few steps and took his leave. Clotilde gazed at him in a stupor, then fell unconscious on the divan.

"At the sight of her in such a state I felt my blood take fire, and I followed the young man out. I overtook him near the stairs, and, grasping him by the wrist, I said to him:

" 'A word with you. The first thing that a man has to be, before he can be a poet, is a gentleman,—and that is something you are not. Your play was hissed because it lacks the same thing that you lack,—and that is a heart. Here, sir, is my card.' "

"And did you send him your seconds, Don Jerónimo?" inquired the medical student.

"Silence, silence!" exclaimed another of the group, "here is Clotilde."

And, in fact, the charming actress at that moment appeared in the doorway, and her large and sad black eyes, all the more beautiful beneath her white Louis XV. coiffure, smiled tenderly upon her faithful friends.

Señorita Luisa's Passion

CHAPTER I

PEPE

Pepe was twenty-five years old when he abandoned a certain city in the south of Spain, in which he was born, fully resolved to become a cabinet minister. Let us see what the reasons were that led him to make this resolution.

His father had been a government clerk on a salary of sixteen thousand *reales*,—and, by the way, what sad thoughts are suggested by that abominable custom of classifying government clerks according to the pay which they receive. Is there nothing more important about a government clerk, nothing nobler or more elevated than his pay? To all appearances, there is not! But, to resume: his father gave him an education above the average. But when Pepe had finished his law course, his father was dead, and the young man found himself, like many another who has chosen the same career, without the means of buying his daily bread,—for it is far harder to get clients to defend, than it is to get the certificate authorizing one to defend clients.

One afternoon he was walking in the outskirts of the city, lamenting his hard lot, and envying that of a workman's family just preparing merrily to despatch their late luncheon, when he heard a voice calling:

"Ho, Pepito, come here and take a bite and a glass with us!"

Pepito proceeded to obey the call and found himself face to face with a certain Juanillo, who had lived, as a boy, in the attic of the house where his own home was, and with whom he used to play in the courtyard and on the stairway together with another boy named Perico Romero, the son of a teacher of Latin, up to the time when the three were old enough to take up the serious business of life, or, what comes to the same thing, up to the time when Perico and he began their professional studies at the university and Juanillo was apprenticed to a shoemaker.

Three very weighty reasons moved Pepe to accept Juanillo's invitation: first, the pleasure of renewing the memories of childhood; secondly, the delicious odor exhaled by the luncheon which he had been asked to share, and thirdly, the weakness of his stomach in which, up to that hour, namely, four o'clock in the afternoon, there had not yet entered even so much as the grace of God.

So Pepe forgot his recent troubles, in company with Juanillo, who told him that for his part he was perfectly happy, because he had no sooner finished his apprenticeship than he found someone who helped to set him up in business for himself, that he had work in plenty, was married, was able to support his family comfortably, owed no man a penny, and had already saved up a few thousand *reales* which were at the disposal of such friends as "did not think it beneath them to talk with poor folk."

"And how about yourself, what have you done?" Juanillo asked.

"I," rejoined Pepe, bitterly, "I am a member of the bar!"

"Well, well! Those are high-sounding words. And what has become of Perico Romero, who was always going around getting off that Latin phrase which he had learned from his father and that sounded something like *All daisies in June are too fat?"*

"He was expelled from the university because he wasn't willing to study, and so cut all his courses."

"Poor Perico, what has become of him since?"

"He went to Madrid as private secretary of a deputy who took a great fancy to him because he amused him so much by singing boatmen's ballads, but I've heard nothing further of him."

"Well, my boy, I am only a poor shoemaker, and there is little I can do to help a member of the bar like yourself; but the good will is all there. If the day should come when you need a couple of shiners, count on me, for I like you because you are the kind of gentleman that does not think it beneath him to talk with a poor man."

"Thank you, Juanillo," replied Pepe. And he took leave of his former friend and playmate, adding, inside his shabby jacket:

"Why in the world did not my esteemed father train me for the career of shoemaker?"

The recollection of the one bit of Latin which Perico Romero had learned from his father, the pedagogue, insisted upon haunting Pepe's thoughts.

"Let us see," he said one day, "whether it is true that fortune favors the brave."

And he had the audacity to ask the hand of a young woman who was as rich as she was beautiful.

The young woman and the young woman's father conferred together re-

garding this offer, and finally they decided that they would have to send Pepe packing, because there was no disguising the fact that Pepe as yet was nothing but a briefless lawyer.

So Pepe was on the point of saying "Devil take that *audaces fortuna juvat,*" considering it a great piece of twaddle, as was proved by the failure of the attempt he had just made, when he read in a government organ from Madrid the following paragraph:

"The new directorship created in the Department of Justice has been intrusted to Señor Don Pedro Romero. We congratulate his majesty's government on this appointment, which will be approved by all impartial citizens because of all the younger men who have a place in the present administration, Señor Romero is one of the most distinguished and industrious."

Pepe continued to cross himself zealously all the while that he was reading these lines, and once more invoking that *audaces fortuna juvat* with renewed faith, he borrowed "a couple of shiners" from Juanillo and took his way to the capital, fully decided to become a cabinet minister.

CHAPTER II

LOVE

So now we have Pepe in Madrid. He made inquiries here, he took observations there, and he listened on every side, and ended by convincing himself that in order to become a cabinet minister the first thing needful was a fashionable suit of clothes. So one afternoon he turned his steps in the direction of the park known as the Retiro, determined not to quit its charming precincts, so propitious for meditation, until he had hit upon what he needed.

He was seated upon a stone bench beneath the shade of a tree, racking his brains for the means of acquiring that confounded, yet indispensable, new suit, when two ladies, dressed in the height of fashion, passed beside him. One of them was young and beautiful, the other showing traces of her years. Behind these ladies came a lackey, and behind the lackey, an equally fashionable young man, who never once took his eyes off the younger woman.

Pepe forgot for the moment the thing which he needed in order to become a cabinet minister, and fell to philosophizing in the following terms:

"That young gentleman is in love with that young lady, and love obliges him to walk behind a lackey. God bless me! To what humiliations lovers must submit. How lucky I am not to be in love! Yet hold on, I suppose I am in love, not with a girl, but with a minister's portfolio, and God knows to what humiliations this love will bring me!"

Pepe interrupted his soliloquy to qualify his judgment as having been too hasty, for he saw that the young man who had been walking behind the lackey had now abandoned the trail of the beautiful young woman, apparently indicating that Pepe had made a mistake in supposing him in love with the vanishing beauty. The young man approached another man, who was seated just behind Pepe, on a bench separated from the one he occupied only by a clump of roses and lilies; and, having greeted him cordially, sat down beside him, and the following conversation ensued:

"Well, well! Good old Lopez in Madrid!"

"Yes, my dear Perez."

"And when did you get here?"

"Something over a week ago."

"And what's the good word from Pamplona?"

"My dear fellow, it is more than two months since I left there; but, according to what my manager tells me, nothing of importance has happened."

"I thought you were going to spend the summer there."

"No; I spent it in Vizcaya; and I assure you that I passed two delightful months from Bilbao to Alforta, and from Alforta to Portugálete and Santurce."

"And now you have come to have a fling at Madrid, eh?"

"To tell you the truth, my dear fellow, I have been having a deuce of a time."

"Why, how can that be? You, a millionaire, young, good-looking——"

"And desperately in love."

"Ha, ha, ha, so that's how the wind blows?"

"Yes, my boy, and you needn't flatter yourself that it was wholly for your sake that I stopped for a talk, because I had a selfish motive behind it. When I had my plans all made to return to Pamplona, I happened to see on the beach a Bilbao girl walking with her mother, a bewitching girl, who quite turned my head. I found out the hotel where they were staying, immediately packed my belongings, and moved over in the hope of making the lady's acquaintance; but the next day, when I expected to see them at the *table d'hôte*, I learned that they were already on their way to Madrid, that their name was Villarrubia, and that they lived in the Calle de Alcalá. I immediately followed in their wake, and here I am, more deeply in love than ever with Luisa, for that is the girl's name, and unable so far to find anyone to introduce me to her family. Do you know these ladies? Or do you know anyone else who could introduce me?"

"Well, my boy, I'm awfully sorry to have to say that I don't call there myself and don't know anyone who does; but I ought to warn you of one thing. I had a friend who died recently of consumption as a result of having lived too gay a life. He used to go there a good deal, and he told me that the mother and daughter are both exceedingly haughty, although they are ladies of culture."

"Haughty and cultured? My dear fellow, those things don't go together! But be it as it may, I am ready to make any sacrifice for the sake of this pestilential and romantic passion, for I cannot live without that girl. I must leave you because they were going as far as the wild-animal house, and I must follow in their steps."

"What you ought to do is to call at their house at the earliest opportunity, and not lower yourself by following the trail of their lackey."

"This gives me a better chance of meeting somebody who can introduce me."

"Don't be an idiot; if you don't meet anybody who can introduce you, introduce yourself, for as the old priest in my native town used to say, quite rightly, *audaces fortuna juvat*."

"My dear fellow, that would be exposing myself to the risk of being ignominously rejected, and if that should happen, there would be nothing left for me but to blow my brains out."

"How poor you are in spite of all your money," exclaimed Perez, clasping the hand of his infatuated friend.

And Lopez, realizing that his friend was right, made no answer, but continued on his way toward the wild-animal house.

"I've got it now," said Pepe to himself, having involuntarily heard the whole of this conversation, "I've got what I need in order to become a cabinet minister," and he fell in behind Lopez without stopping to think that if Lopez, out of love for a girl, lowered himself to the point of following in the trail of a lackey, he himself, out of love of a portfolio, stooped to the point of following the trail of a man who followed in the trail of a lackey.

CHAPTER III

CABALLERO!

Lopez proceeded on his way, smoking as he went. Pepe overtaking him, took out a cigar and inquired:

"Will you favor me with a light, if it is not too much trouble?"

"I shall be glad to."

Pepe lit his cigar and tried to draw Lopez into conversation. Lopez had little inclination to talk; but Pepe, bearing in mind that *audaces fortuna juvat,* sustained the dialogue in the face of wind and wave.

"Do you know this Retiro is delightful?"

"Indeed it is."

"What I don't like are the meadows in the suburbs of Madrid, they are so parched."

"Indeed they are."

"Judging from your accent, you must come from the north."

"Indeed I do."

"The country there is certainly green and fresh and beautiful."

"Indeed it is."

Lopez had no desire to talk, and Pepe was quite aware of it; and since he was by no means thick-skinned, he was on the point of beating a retreat, when he once again remembered that *fortune favors the bold.*

"Caballero," he said, in a tone of assurance, "pardon the liberty I am about to take, for even if it seems impertinent, I will convince you before I am done that it is not."

"Say what you wish," replied Lopez, much astonished by this preamble.

"Very well, without meaning to, I overheard the conversation between you and your friend Perez, and so I can't help knowing that you are in love with Luisita de Villarrubia."

"Caballero!" murmured Lopez, indignantly.

"Now, please, please, don't get excited, let me finish what I was saying."

"Very well, go on, but be careful what you say."

"All I want to say is that I call on the Villarrubia ladies whenever I please."

"You do?" exclaimed Lopez, carried away by his first impulse of delight. Then, quickly checking himself, he added quite stiffly, "And what is your object in telling me that, *caballero?"*

"Because I am young, like yourself, and can understand and respect the passion with which the Señorita Luisa has inspired you."

"But with what right do you meddle in a matter which is no concern of yours?"

"My dear fellow, let us do away

with hypocrisy and speak frankly. I know that frankness pleases you, because it is characteristic of every Navarrese."

"Well, yes, it does please me," admitted Lopez, yielding under Pepe's flattering allusion to his birthplace.

"Today for you, tomorrow for me. Men ought to aid each other mutually. Would you like me to take you to call at the home of the Villarrubia ladies?"

"Indeed I would."

"Then I will do so with the greatest pleasure."

"When will you take me?"

"Tomorrow, if that suits you."

"Please accept my card and address."

"Please accept mine in exchange."

Pepe and Lopez exchanged cards, and after a few more words, shook hands, Lopez proceeding in the direction of the animal house, while Pepe turned back towards Madrid and made inquiries as to who was at that moment the leading tailor.

CHAPTER IV

MANNERS

It was two o'clock the following day, and Lopez could be seen persistently hanging over the balcony, in his impatience for the arrival of Pepe, who had promised to call for him at that hour to present him to the Villarrubia ladies.

Lopez was resplendently arrayed; for Pepe had impressed upon him the importance of this, in view of the fact that these ladies dressed in the height of fashion and expected the same of all who frequented their house. At last the door-bell rang and Pepe arrived; but Lopez was unpleasantly surprised to see him wearing the shabby, much-worn garments of the day before.

"My friend," Pepe told him, "we cannot go today, and perhaps not for several days, to the Villarrubia house; and it cuts me to the heart, not only because I am fraid you will doubt my sincerity, but also because I know how impatient you are to meet and talk with Luisita."

"But, why? Has something urgent come up?"

"Not at all. But you know I told you yesterday that in calling at that house it is essential to be dressed quite immaculately, just as you are, and not with the modest everyday clothes that I am wearing."

"So I understood, and that is why I was surprised that you had not dressed for the occasion."

"It was impossible."

"But, why?"

"Because,—deuce take it!—I may as well be frank with you, for you are a Navarrese, and we both of us are too much men of the world to get excited over nothing. I expected a letter from home this morning containing a check with which I was going to pay for some clothes that I am having made at Caracuel's,—and all that came was a line from my family telling me that for the time being I needn't expect a penny, because the olive crop has been a failure. So you see, the only thing left to do was to be frank and withdraw the promise that I made you yesterday."

"I don't see any reason for your withdrawing it."

"But, my dear fellow, how can I show myself at their house?"

"By wearing the clothes that you offered at Caracuel's, which you will pay for out of these four thousand *reales*

that I beg you will do me the favor of accepting."

"I accept them on one condition, that you will allow me to pay them back as soon as I become a cabinet minister."

"That is a bargain," replied Lopez, smiling and saying to himself, "what charming manners those Andalusians have!"

Pepe and Lopez hereupon made an appointment for the following day at the same hour, it being understood that this time the former would present himself arrayed in a manner worthy of the Villarrubia standards.

As Pepe directed his steps toward Caracuel's, where his measure had been taken the previous day for a complete outfit of the very latest cut, to be finished at top speed, he soliloquized after the following fashion: "Well, sir, I have supplied the most pressing of the various necessities that stand between me and a government ministry! But how am I ever going to make good tomorrow, at the house of the Villarrubia ladies, whom I saw yesterday for the first time in my life? But away with hesitation and misgivings, since fortune favors the brave! And for the sake of winning a portfolio, it is well worth the risk of being kicked down a few stairs!"

CHAPTER V

LUISITA!

PUNCTUALLY at two o'clock on the following day, a stylish carriage drew up in front of Lopez's residence, and Pepe sprang out.—Pepe transformed into an Adonis, if one may conceive of an Adonis clad in trousers costing two hundred *reales,* a frock coat at eight hundred, a waistcoat at a hundred and seventy, and a shirt at the same figure, a hat at a hundred and twenty, shoes of like value, and gloves that cost him four *pesetas.*

Pepe and Lopez promptly reëntered the carriage, the former calling to the driver, "Calle de Alcalá, the Villarrubia house!"

The carriage set out at breakneck speed, and when they came within an ace of running down a poor woman at the Puerto del Sol, the latter exclaimed:

"Blessed Virgin, but there must at least have been a cabinet minister in that carriage, to judge from the speed they are making!"

"Coming events cast their shadows," murmured Pepe, overhearing her. And shortly afterwards he and his companion had reached the Villarrubia residence.

Having mentally invoked the aid, once more, of his *audaces fortuna juvat,* Pepe addressed the man-servant who was standing before the reception-room

"Juan," he commanded, "announce us to the ladies."

Now, the man's name was not Juan; but it happened to be the name of one of his fellow servants, and the tone in which the gentleman addressed him convinced him that this was one of the regular callers at the house. So he timidly inquired whom he was to announce.

"Why, you rascal, don't you remember me? Or do you want to get your ears pulled?" exclaimed Pepe in threatening tones.

The servant, greatly flustered, attempted no answer, but went to notify the ladies, who, after reproving him for not having obtained the callers' names,

instructed him to show the gentlemen into the parlor.

A few moments later, the Villarrubia ladies entered the drawing-room, and Pepe advanced to meet them, greeting them without embarrassment and shaking hands with the assurance of old acquaintance.

Pepe's serenity and self-possession formed a singular contrast with the agitation and nervousness of Lopez, in the presence of the woman who had cost the latter so many sighs and sleepless nights and weary footsteps.

Luisita, to whom Lopez was no mere stranger, because she had noticed the amorous ardor which he had followed her from place to place, and had even dreamed of him, for she was quite impressionable,—and we all know that the more impressionable girls are, the more they dream of good-looking young men, —Luisa, as I was saying, was not a whit less agitated than her lover, at finding herself face to face with him.

The mother, who was not half so easily agitated as her daughter, raised her head haughtily; and Pepe, foreseeing that a storm was brewing, hastened to take his friend by the hand and to say, with all the assurance that the case demanded:

"I am taking the liberty to introduce to you the Señor Don Fermin Lopez, a wealthy landholder from Navarre, and one of my best friends."

"But how about you? Who is introducing you, *caballero?*" demanded the elderly lady with alarming stiffness.

"Oh, I, señora," rejoined Pepe, retreating towards the hall door, "I owe my introduction to my lack of timidity."

"What insolence!" exclaimed the señora and Lopez, simultaneously. And the latter sprang forward to slap the face of the man who had placed him in such a ridiculous position; but Pepe was already at the foot of the stairs, and, flinging himself into the carriage, was soon dashing down the length of the Calle de Alcalá, in the direction of the Puerto del Sol.

Lopez's first impulse was to rush in pursuit and make him pay for the trick as he deserved. But he controlled himself, realizing that his first duty was to clear himself in the eyes of the ladies, and wait until later to hunt out the trickster and settle with him.

"Ladies, please don't think that I am going to run away, like that scoundrel. Be so kind as to hear me, and afterwards judge of me as it seems best. I am a stranger, and since I expect to reside for some time in Madrid, I was eager to have the honor of your acquaintance, for I have heard nothing but praise of your gracious hospitality, and was told that the best society in the capital frequented your house. Quite by chance, a few days ago, I met that scoundrel, who imposed upon me, representing himself as a person of culture and refinement, and assured me that he had the honor of your acquaintance, and volunteered to introduce me here at your home. Condemn me for being a credulous fool, but don't condemn me for lack of respect towards the house in which I now find myself, nor towards its inmates, whom I hold in the highest esteem."

"You are completely vindicated in our eyes," said the elder lady, cordially extending her hand to Lopez, whereupon Luisita in turn extended hers. "I know enough of the world to recognize that you have spoken to us in all sincerity,

and that you are a thorough gentleman, to whom we open our house and offer our friendship, believing that we shall be honored by your acceptance of both."

"Thank you, señora," exclaimed Lopez, almost weeping with happiness and relief.

And an hour later he was ransacking all Madrid, vainly seeking for Pepe, in order to slay him; I say vainly, because Pepe had left town an hour before, bound for La Granja, where at that time the court was sitting.

Lopez soon became one of the most assiduous and welcome visitors to the Villarrubia mansion. Yet there was nothing strange about his attendance at the nightly gatherings, because no evening passed without opportunity for a tender *tête-à-tête* with Luisita.

One night, which as it happened coincided with the return of the court to Madrid, the following dialogue took place between Luisita and Lopez:

Luisita: "Mamma mistrusts that there is *something* between us, and has tormented me today with questions."

Lopez: "And did you tell her *anything?*"

Luisita: "No, I didn't dare to tell her."

Lopez: "Do you give me permission to speak?"

Luisita: (holding her breath, in order to bring a blush to her cheek), "If you really and truly love me——"

Lopez: (darting fire from his eyes): "I idolize you, Luisita!"

Luisita: (rewarding him with a coy glance): "What wretches you men are!"

The *tête-à-tête* was interrupted by the arrival of a fellow guest, who entered, exclaiming:

"I have good news for our friend, Lopez. I just saw, at the Casino, that Andalusian he is looking for."

Lopez's eyes flashed with angry satisfaction, and the *tête-à-tête* continued in the following terms:

Luisita: "I forbid you to say a single word to that man!"

Lopez: "Luisita, let me slay him!"

Luisita: "No, I won't let you, you ungrateful man!"

Lopez: "Why do you call me ungrateful?"

Luisita: "Because you want to slay the one who gave us the happiness of knowing and seeing each other."

Lopez: "You are quite right. Let the Lord who created him do the slaying!"

A few months subsequent to this conversation, the *Correspondencia* contained the following paragraph:

Yesterday witnessed the marriage of the charming Señorita del Villarrubia with the wealthy and popular young Navarrese, Don Fermin Lopez. Among the high dignitaries who attended the ceremony were included his Excellency, Señor Don Pedro Romero, Minister of Justice, and his friend and fellow townsman, the illustrious Señor Don José—— (I suppress the surname because I am not fully authorized to reveal it), Assistant Secretary to the Minister of Finance. The bridal couple started the same evening for France, where they will pass their honeymoon.

CHAPTER VI

COMPLIMENTS

LOPEZ had been married about two years when he received a sealed letter,

containing a check for four thousand *reales,* and a note, saying:

"My compliments to Señor Lopez, and I herewith return the four thousand *reales* which I borrowed from him by force.

"———— ————,
"Minister of Finance."

Lopez took an envelope and sealed it, after having enclosed the check for four thousand *reales,* together with a note conceived in the following terms:

"My compliments to the Minister of Finance, and I herewith return the four thousand *reales,* in the hope that he will not again be obliged to resort to compulsory loans.

"FERMIN LOPEZ."

Some time subsequent to this exchange of letters, I happened to call upon Pepe. "And what are you doing at present?" he asked, in the course of my call.

"I am writing a piece of fiction," I answered, "entitled *To Desire Is to Possess.*"

"That is not fiction," he rejoined.

"What is it, then?"

"It is the simple truth! If you doubt it, listen to how I became minister." And Pepe then related to me what you have just read.

A Forest Betrothal

ONE day in the month of June, 1845, Master Zacharias' fishing-basket was so full of salmon-trout, about three o'clock in the afternoon, that the good man was loath to take any more; for, as Pathfinder says: "We must leave some for to-morrow!" After having washed his in a stream and carefully covered them with field-sorrel and rowell, to keep them fresh; after having wound up his line and bathed his hands and face; a sense of drowsiness tempted him to take a nap in the heather. The heat was so excessive that he preferred to wait until the shadows lengthened before reclimbing the steep ascent of Bigelberg.

Breaking his crust of bread and wetting his lips with a draught of Rikevir, he climbed down fifteen or twenty steps from the path and stretched himself on the moss-covered ground, under the shade of the pine-trees; his eyelids heavy with sleep.

A thousand animate creatures had lived their long life of an hour, when the judge was wakened by the whistle of a bird, which sounded strange to him. He sat up to look around, and judge his surprise; the so-called bird was a young girl of seventeen or eighteen years of age; fresh, with rosy cheeks and vermilion lips, brown hair, which hung in two long tresses behind her. A short poppy-colored skirt, with a tightly-laced bodice, completed her costume. She was a young peasant, who was rapidly descending the sandy path down the side of Bigelberg, a basket poised on her head, and her arms a little sunburned, but plump, were gracefully resting on her hips.

"Oh, what a charming bird; but she

whistles well and her pretty chin, round like a peach, is sweet to look upon."

Mr. Zacharias was all emotion—a rush of hot blood, which made his heart beat, as it did at twenty, coursed through his veins. Blushing, he arose to his feet.

"Good-day, my pretty one!" he said.

The young girl stopped short—opened her big eyes and recognized him (for who did not know the dear old Judge Zacharias in that part of the country?).

"Ah!" she said, with a bright smile, "it is Mr. Zacharias Seiler!"

The old man approached her—he tried to speak—but all he could do was to stammer a few unintelligible words, just like a very young man—his embarrassment was so great that he completely disconcerted the young girl. At last he managed to say:

"Where are you going through the forest at this hour, my dear child?"

She stretched out her hand and showed him, way at the end of the valley, a forester's house.

"I am returning to my father's house, the Corporal Yeri Foerster. You know him, without doubt, Monsieur le Juge."

"What, are you our brave Yeri's daughter? Ah, do I know him? A very worthy man. Then you are little Charlotte of whom he has often spoken to me when he came with his official reports?"

"Yes, Monsieur; I have just come from the town and am returning home."

"That is a very pretty bunch of Alpine berries you have," exclaimed the old man.

She detached the bouquet from her belt and tendered it to him.

"If it would please you, Monsieur Seiler."

Zacharias was touched.

"Yes, indeed," he said, "I will accept it, and I will accompany you home. I am anxious to see this brave Foerster again. He must be getting old by now."

"He is about your age, Monsieur le Juge," said Charlotte innocently, "between fifty-five and sixty years of age."

This simple speech recalled the good man to his senses, and as he walked beside her he became pensive.

What was he thinking of? Nobody could tell; but how many times, how many times has it happened that a brave and worthy man, thinking that he had fulfilled all his duties, finds that he has neglected the greatest, the most sacred, the most beautiful of all—that of love. And what it costs him to think of it when it is too late.

Soon Mr. Zacharias and Charlotte came to the turn of the valley where the path spanned a little pond by means of a rustic bridge, and led straight to the corporal's house. They could now see Yeri Foerster, his large felt hat decorated with a twig of heather, his calm eyes, his brown cheeks and grayish hair, seated on the stone bench near his doorway; two beautiful hunting dogs, with reddish-brown coats, lay at his feet, and the high vine arbor behind him rose to the peak of the gable roof.

The shadows on Romelstein were lengthening and the setting sun spread its purple fringe behind the high fir-trees on Alpnach.

The old corporal, whose eyes were as piercing as an eagle's, recognized Monsieur Zacharias and his daughter from afar. He came toward them, lifting his felt hat respectfully.

"Welcome, Monsieur le Juge," he said in the frank and cordial voice of a

mountaineer; "what happy circumstance has procured me the honor of a visit?"

"Master Yeri," replied the good man, "I am belated in your mountains. Have you a vacant corner at your table and a bed at the disposition of a friend?"

"Ah!" cried the corporal, "if there were but one bed in the house, should it not be at the service of the best, the most honored of our ex-magistrates of Stantz? Monsieur Seiler, what an honor you confer on Yeri Foerster's humble home."

"Christine, Christine! Monsieur le Juge Zacharias Seiler wishes to sleep under our roof to-night."

Then a little old woman, her face wrinkled like a vine leaf, but still fresh and laughing, her head crowned by a cap with wide black ribbons, appeared on the threshold and disappeared again, murmuring:

"What? Is it possible? Monsieur le Juge!"

"My good people," said Mr. Zacharias, "truly you do me too much honor —I hope——"

"Monsieur le Juge, if you forget the favors you have done to others, they remember them."

Charlotte placed her basket on the table, feeling very proud at having been the means of bringing so distinguished a visitor to the house. She took out the sugar, the coffee and all the little odds and ends of household provisions which she had purchased in the town. And Zacharias, gazing at her pretty profile, felt himself agitated once more, his poor old heart beat more quickly in his bosom and seemed to say to him: "This is love, Zacharias! This is love! This is love!"

To tell you the truth, my dear friends, Mr. Seiler spent the evening with the Head Forester, Yeri Foerster, perfectly oblivious to the fact of Therèse's uneasiness, to his promise to return before seven o'clock, to all his old habits of order and submission.

Picture to yourself the large room, the time-browned rafters of the ceiling, the windows opened on the silent valley, the round table in the middle of the room, covered with a white cloth, with red stripes running through it; the light from the lamp, bringing out more clearly the grave faces of Zacharias and Yeri, the rosy, laughing features of Charlotte, and Dame Christine's little cap, with long fluttering streamers. Picture to yourself the soup-tureen, with gayly-flowered bowl, from which arose an appetising odor, the dish of trout garnished with parsley, the plates filled with fruits and little meal cakes as yellow as gold; then worthy Father Zacharias, handing first one and then the other of the plates of fruit and cakes to Charlotte, who lowered her eyes, frightened at the old man's compliments and tender speeches.

Yeri was quite puffed up at his praise, but Dame Christine said: "Ah, Monsieur le Juge! You are too good. You do not know how much trouble this little girl gives us, or how headstrong she is when she wants anything. You will spoil her with so many compliments."

To which speech Mr. Zacharias made reply:

"Dame Christine, you possess a treasure! Mademoiselle Charlotte merits all the good I have said of her."

Then Master Yeri, raising his glass, cried out:

"Let us drink to the health of our

good and venerated Judge Zacharias Seiler!"

The toast was drunk with a will.

Just then the clock, in its hoarse voice, struck the hour of eleven. Out of doors, there was the great silence of the forest, the grasshopper's last cry, the vague murmur of the river. As the hour sounded, they rose, preparatory to retiring. How fresh and agile he felt! With what ardor, had he dared, would he not have pressed a kiss upon Charlotte's little hand! Oh, but he must not think of that now! Later on, perhaps!

"Come, Master Yeri," he said, "it is bedtime. Good-night, and many thanks for your hospitality."

"At what hour do you wish to rise, Monsieur?" asked Christine.

"Oh!" he replied gazing at Charlotte, "I am an early bird. I do not feel my age, though perhaps you might not think so. I rise at five o'clock."

"Like me, Monsieur Seiler," cried the Head Forester. I rise before daybreak; but I must confess it is tiresome all the same—we are no longer young. Ha! Ha!"

"Bah! I have never had anything ail me, Master Forester; I have never been more vigorous or more nimble."

And suiting his actions to his words, he ran briskly up the steep steps of the staircase. Really Mr. Zacharias was no more than twenty; but his twenty years lasted about twenty minutes, and once nestled in the large canopied bed, with the covers drawn up to his chin and his handkerchief tied around his head, in lieu of a nightcap, he said to himself:

"Sleep Zacharias! Sleep! You have great need of rest; you are very tired."

And the good man slept until nine o'clock. The forester returning from his rounds, uneasy at his non-appearance, went up to his room and wished him good morning. Then seeing the sun high in the heavens, hearing the birds warbling in the foliage, the Judge, ashamed of his boastfulness of the previous night, arose, alleging as an excuse for his prolonged slumbers, the fatigue of fishing and the length of the supper of the evening before.

"Ah, Monsieur Seiler," said tne forester, "it is perfectly natural; I would love dearly myself to sleep in the mornings, but I must always be on the go. What I want is a son-in-law, a strong youth to rpelace me; I would voluntarily give him my gun and my hunting pouch."

Zacharias could not restrain a feeling of great uneasiness at these words. Being dressed, he descended in silence. Christine was waiting with his breakfast; Charlotte had gone to the hay field.

The breakfast was short, and Mr. Seiler having thanked these good people for their hospitality, turned his face toward Stantz; he became pensive, as he thought of the worry to which Mademoiselle Therèse had been subjected; yet he was not able to tear his hopes from his heart, nor the thousand charming illusions, which came to him like a latecomer in a nest of warblers.

By Autumn he had fallen so into the habit of going to the forester's house that he was oftener there than at his own; and the Head Forester, not knowing to what love of fishing to attribute these visits, often found himself embarrassed at being obliged to refuse the multiplicity of presents which the worthy ex-magistrate (he himself being

very much at home) begged of him to accept in compensation for his daily hospitality.

Besides, Mr. Seiler wished to share all his occupations, following him in his rounds in the Grinderwald and Entilbach.

Yeri Foerster often shook his head, saying: "I never knew a more honest or better judge than Mr. Zacharias Seiler. When I used to bring my reports to him, formerly, he always praised me, and it is to him that I owe my raise to the rank of Head Forester. But," he added to his wife, "I am afraid the poor man is a little out of his head. Did he not help Charlotte in the hay field, to the infinite enjoyment of the peasants? Truly, Christine, it is not right; but then I dare not say so to him, he is so much above us. Now he wants me to accept a pension—and such a pension—one hundred florins a month. And that silk dress he gave Charlotte on her birthday. Do young girls wear silk dresses in our valley? Is a silk dress the thing for a forester's daughter?"

"Leave him alone," said the wife. "He is contented with a little milk and meal. He likes to be with us; it is a change from his lonesome city life, with no one to talk to but his old governess; whilst here the little one looks after him. He likes to talk to her. Who knows but he may end by adopting her and leave her something in his will?"

The Head Forester, not knowing what to say, shrugged his shoulders; his good judgment told him there was some mystery, but he never dreamed of suspecting the good man's whole folly.

One fine morning a wagon slowly wended its way down the sides of Bigelberg loaded with three casks of old Rikevir wine. Of all the presents that could be given to him this was the most acceptable, for Yeri Foerster loved, above everything else, a good glass of wine.

"That warms one up," he would say, laughing. And when he had tasted this wine he could not help saying:

"Mr. Zacharias is really the best man in the world. Has he not filled my cellar for me? Charlotte, go and gather the prettiest flowers in the garden; cut all the roses and the jasmine, make them into a bouquet, and when he comes you will present them to him yourself. Charlotte! Charlotte! Hurry up, here he comes with his long pole."

At this moment the old man appeared descending the hillside in the shade of the pines with a brisk step.

As far off as Yeri could make himself heard, he called out, his glass in his hand:

"Here is to the best man I know! Here is to our benefactor."

And Zacharias smiled. Dame Christine had already commenced preparations for dinner; a rabbit was turning at the spit and the savory odor of the soup whetted Mr. Seiler's appetite.

The old Judge's eyes brightened when he saw Charlotte in her short poppy-colored skirt, her arms bare to the elbow, running here and there in the garden paths gathering the flowers, and when he saw her approaching him with her huge bouquet, which she humbly presented to him with downcast eyes.

"Monsieur le Juge, will you deign to accept this bouquet from your little friend Charlotte?"

A sudden blush overspread his ven-

erable cheeks, and as she stooped to kiss his hand, he said:

"No, no, my dear child; accept rather from your old friend, your best friend, a more tender embrace."

He kissed both her burning cheeks. The Head Forester laughing heartily, cried out:

"Monsieur Seiler, come and sit down under the acacia tree and drink some of your own wine. Ah, my wife is right when she calls you our benefactor."

Mr. Zacharias seated himself at the little round table, placing his pole behind him; Charlotte sat facing him, Yeri Foerster was on his right; then dinner was served and Mr. Seiler started to speak of his plans for the future.

He was wealthy and had inherited a fine fortune from his parents. He wished to buy some few hundred acres of forest land in the valley, and build in the midst a forester's lodge. "We would always be together," he said turning to Yeri Foerster, "sometimes you at my house, sometimes I at yours."

Christine gave her advice, and they chatted, planning now one thing, then another. Charlotte seemed perfectly contented, and Zacharias imagined that these simple people understood him.

Thus the time passed, and when night had fallen and they had had a surfeit of Rikevir, of rabbit and of Dame Christine's "koechten" sprinkled with cinnamon, Mr. Seiler, happy and contented, full of joyous hope, ascended to his room, putting off until to-morrow his declaration, not doubting for a moment but that it would be accepted.

About this time of the year the mountaineers from Harberg, Kusnacht and the surrounding hamlets descend from their mountains about one o'clock in the morning and commence to mow the high grass in the valleys. One can hear their monotonous songs in the middle of the night keeping time to the circular movement of the scythes, the jingle of the cattle bells, and the young men's and girls' voices laughing afar in the silence of the night. It is a strange harmony, especially when the night is clear and there is a bright moon, and the heavy dew falling makes a pitter-patter on the leaves of the great forest trees.

Mr. Zacharias heard nothing of all this, for he was sleeping soundly; but the noise of a handful of peas being thrown against the window waked him suddenly. He listened and heard outside at the bottom of the wall, a "scit! scit!" so softly whispered that you might almost think it the cry of some bird. Nevertheless, the good man's heart fluttered.

"What is that?" he cried.

After a few seconds' silence a soft voice replied:

"Charlotte, Charlotte—it is I!"

Zacharias trembled; and as he listened with ears on the alert for each sound, the foliage on the trellis struck against the window and a figure climbed up quietly—oh so quietly—then stopped and stared into the room.

The old man being indignant at this, rose and opened the window, upon which the stranger climbed through noiselessly.

"Do not be frightened, Charlotte," he said, "I have come to tell you some good news. My father will be here to-morrow."

He received no response, for the reason that Zacharias was trying to light the lamp.

"Where are you, Charlotte?"

"Here I am," cried the old man turning with a livid face and gazing fiercely at his rival.

The young man who stood before him was tall and slender, with large, frank, black eyes, brown cheeks, rosy lips, just covered with a little moustache, and a large brown, felt hat, tilted a little to one side.

The apparition of Zacharias stunned him to immovability. But as the Judge was about to cry out, he exclaimed:

"In the name of Heaven, do not call. I am no robber—I love Charlotte!"

"And—she—she?" stammered Zacharias.

"She loves me also! Oh, you need have no fear if you are one of her relations. We were betrothed at the Kusnacht feast. The fiancés of the Grinderwald and the Entilbach have the right to visit in the night. It is a custom of Unterwald. All the Swiss know that."

"Yeri Foerster—Yeri, Charlotte's father, never told me."

"No, he does not know of our betrothal yet," said the other, in a lower tone of voice; "when I asked his permission last year he told me to wait—that his daughter was too young yet—we were betrothed secretly. Only as I had not the Forester's consent, I did not come in the night-time. This is the first time. I saw Charlotte in the town; but the time seemed so long to us both that I ended by confessing all to my father, and he has promised to see Yeri to-morrow. Ah, Monsieur, I knew it would give such pleasure to Charlotte that I could not help coming to announce my good news."

The poor old man fell back in his chair and covered his face with his hands. Oh, how he suffered! What bitter thoughts passed through his brain; what a sad awakening after so many sweet and joyous dreams.

And the young mountaineer was not a whit more comfortable, as he stood leaning against a corner of the wall, his arms crossed over his breast, and the following thoughts running through his head:

"If old Foerster, who does not know of our betrothal, finds me here, he will kill me without listening to one word of explanation. That is certain."

And he gazed anxiously at the door, his ear on the alert for the least sound.

A few moments afterward, Zacharias lifting his head, as though awakening from a dream, asked him:

"What is your name?"

"Karl Imnant, Monsieur."

"What is your business?"

"My father hopes to obtain the position of a forester in the Grinderwald for me."

There was a long silence and Zacharias looked at the young man with an envious eye.

"And she loves you?" he asked in a broken voice.

"Oh, yes, Monsieur; we love each other devotedly."

And Zacharias, letting his eyes fall on his thin legs and his hands wrinkled and veined, murmured:

"Yes, she ought to love him; he is young and handsome."

And his head fell on his breast again. All at once he arose, trembling in every limb, and opened the window.

"Young man, you have done very wrong; you will never know how much wrong you have really done. You must obtain Mr. Foerster's consent—but go

—go—you will hear from me soon."

The young mountaineer did not wait for a second invitation; with one bound he jumped to the path below and disappeared behind the grand old trees.

"Poor, poor Zacharias," the old Judge murmured, "all your illusions are fled."

At seven o'clock, having regained his usual calmness of demeanor, he descended to the room below, where Charlotte, Dame Christine and Yeri were already waiting breakfast for him. The old man, turning his eyes from the young girl, advanced to the Head Forester, saying:

"My friend, I have a favor to ask of you. You know the son of the forester of the Grinderwald, do you not?"

"Karl Imnant, why yes, sir!"

"He is a worthy young man, and well behaved, I believe."

"I think so, Monsieur."

"Is he capable of succeeding his father?"

"Yes, he is twenty-one years old; he knows all about tree-clipping, which is the most necessary thing of all—he knows how to read and how to write; but that is not all; he must have influence."

"Well, Master Yeri, I still have some influence in the Department of Forests and Rivers. This day fortnight, or three weeks at the latest, Karl Imnant shall be Assistant Forester of the Grinderwald, and I ask the hand of your daughter Charlotte for this brave young man."

At this request, Charlotte, who had blushed and trembled with fear, uttered a cry and fell back into her mother's arms.

Her father looking at her severely, said: "What is the matter, Charlotte? Do you refuse?"

"Oh, no, no, father—no!"

"That is as it should be! As for myself, I should never have refused any request of Mr. Zacharias Seiler's! Come here and embrace your benefactor."

Charlotte ran toward him and the old man pressed her to his heart, gazing long and earnestly at her, with eyes filled with tears. Then pleading business he started home, with only a crust of bread in his basket for breakfast.

Fifteen days afterward, Karl Imnant received the appointment of forester, taking his father's place. Eight days later, he and Charlotte were married.

The guests drank the rich Rikevir wine, so highly esteemed by Yeri Foerster, and which seemed to him to have arrived so opportunely for the feast.

Mr. Zacharias Seiler was not present that day at the wedding, being ill at home. Since then he rarely goes fishing —and then, always to the Brünnen—toward the lake—on the other side of the mountain.

At a Certain Church

THERE formerly resided in the rich and beautiful city of Bologna a brave and intelligent youth of the name of Faustino, whose birth and accomplishments entitled him to rank among the noblest and proudest of the place. To these gifts of Nature and of Fortune was added a susceptible heart, and he soon became deeply enamored of a young lady of exquisite beauty, whose

name was Eugenia, and who in a short time seemed inclined to return his passion with equal tenderness and truth. Such was her lover's extreme desire of beholding her that he availed himself of every opportunity and encountered every risk to enjoy her society, frequently being in wait for hours to catch a mere glimpse of her, and employing numberless emissaries to instruct him as to her motions. Though the young lady's parents had been unable to extort any confession of her attachment from her own lips, they were at no loss to perceive it, and endeavored to obviate the danger to be apprehended from its indulgence, believing that the young lover, on account of his superior rank and fortune, entertained no serious intentions of making her his wife.

With this view they kept a very strict watch over their daughter, debarring her from the visits, and even from the sight of Faustino, as much as they possibly could. Yet her mother, being of a religious turn of mind, was unwilling that she should relinquish her usual attendance on divine worship, and herself accompanied her daughter every morning to hear mass at a church near their own house, but at so very early an hour that not even the artisans of the city, much less the young gentry of the place, were stirring. And there she heard service performed by a priest expressly on her own account, though several other persons might happen to be present who were in the habit of very early rising.

Now among these was a certain corn merchant, who had been established only for a short time in Bologna. His name was Ser Nastagio de' Rodiotti, a man who had driven many a hard bargain and thriven wonderfully in his trade, but of so devout a turn withal that he would not for the world have made an usurious contract, or even speculated to any extent, without having first punctually attended mass, believing doubtless that so good an example more than counterbalanced, in the eye of Heaven, the evil consequences of his actions. And these were certainly very great, especially in the way of raising the price of bread by his vast monopoly of that necessary article of life. Such, however, was his exemplary conduct in attending church that he lost not a single opportunity of showing himself there among the earliest of the congregation, having afterwards the consolation to reflect that he had discharged all his religious duties and was ready for business before a great portion of his fellow citizens were stirring.

Now in a short time it also reached the ears of Faustino, through the good offices, it is supposed, of the young lady, that high mass was to be heard every morning at a certain church, with every particular relating to the devotees who attended and the nearest way thither. Rejoiced at this news, her lover now resolved to rise somewhat earlier than he had been accustomed to do, that he might avail himself of the same advantage that the lady enjoyed in beginning the day with religious duties. For this purpose he assumed a different dress, the better to deceive the eyes of her careful mother, being perfectly aware that she merely made her appearance thus early with her daughter for the sake of concealing her from his sight.

In this way the young lady had the merit of bringing Faustino to church, where they had the pleasure of gazing

at each other with the utmost devotion; except indeed when the unlucky tradesman whom we have just mentioned happened to place himself, as was frequently the case, exactly in their way, so as to intercept the silent communion of souls. And this he did in so vexatious a manner that they could scarcely observe each other for a moment without exposing themselves to his searching eye and keen observation. Greatly displeased at this kind of inquisition into his looks and motions, the lover frequently wished the devout corn dealer in purgatory, or that he would at least offer up his prayers in another church.

Such an antipathy did he at length conceive to Ser Nastagio that he resolved to employ his utmost efforts to prevail upon him to withdraw himself from that spot. Revolving in his mind a great variety of plans, he at last hit upon one which he believed could not fail to succeed, and in a manner equally safe and amusing. With this view he hastened without delay to the officiating priest, whom he addressed in the following pious and charitable strain:

"It has ever been esteemed, my good Messere Pastore, a most heavenly and laudable disposition to devote ourselves to the relief of our poorer brethren, and this you doubtless know far better than I can inform you, from the fact of our blessed Savior having actually appeared on earth to redeem us from our sins. But though every species of charity is highly commendable, that which seeks out its objects without waiting to be solicited far transcends the rest. For there are many who, however destitute, feel ashamed to come forward for the purpose of begging alms.

"Now I think, my worthy pastor, that I have of late observed one of these deserving objects in a person who frequents your church. He was formerly a Jew, but through the mercy of Heaven, which never ceases, not long ago he became a Christian, and one whose exemplary life and conduct render him in all respects worthy of the name. Yet, on the other hand, there is not a more destitute being on the face of the earth, while such is his modesty that I assure you I have frequently had the utmost difficulty in persuading him to accept of alms. It would really be a very meritorious act, worthy of the excellent character I have heard of you, were you to touch some morning upon his cruel misfortunes, relating his conversion to our faith and the singular modesty with which he attempts to conceal his wants. This would probably procure for him a handsome contribution, and if you will only have the kindness to apprise me of the day, I will take care to bring a number of my friends along with me, and we shall be sure to find this poor fellow seated in your church, where I know he is often employed in listening gratefully to your spiritual advice and consolation."

Our kind-hearted priest, unlike some of his brethren, who are too apt to appropriate the alms of the poor to themselves, making a traffic of the divine mercy of their Redeemer, impelled only by pure zeal and charity, cheerfully complied with the wily lover's request. He proposed, then, as the most favorable occasion, the next Sunday morning, when a large assemblage of people would be present, regretting that he had not been sooner made acquainted with the affair. Faustino next gave the priest an accurate description of the

features, person, and dress of our unfortunate corn merchant, observing that the poor man always appeared neat and clean, so that he could not possibly mistake him. Then taking leave of the good friar, he hastened to communicate this piece of mischief to some of his youthful companions, all of whom now awaited with great impatience for the approaching Sunday. Punctually on its arrival were they found assembled at the church, even early enough to hear the first mass, and there Messere Nastagio was seen stationed at his usual post, surrounded by a crowd of people collected for the purpose of witnessing the consecration of the place. After going through the Evangelists and the Creed, and muttering a few *aves,* the good priest paused and looked about him; then wiping his forehead and taking breath for a while, he again addressed the congregation, opening his subject as follows:

"Dearly beloved brethren, you must be aware, for our Savior himself has enlightened you on that head, and I have myself likewise insisted upon it as well as I could; you must be aware, I say, that the most pleasing thing you can do in the eyes of the Lord is to show your charity towards poorer Christions, loving and assisting them according to their wants, as far as lies in your power. I trust, therefore, I shall not have much difficulty in persuading you to show the fruits of this good seed of charity in the manner I desire. For as I know you are not wanting in charity, but rather abounding in good works, I am not afraid to inform you that there is a most deserving yet destitute object before you, who, though too modest to urge your compassion, is in every way worthy of it. Pray take pity upon him; I commend him to your kindness.

"Behold him," he cried, pointing full at Ser Nastagio; "lo! thou art the man. Yes," he continued, while the corn merchant stared at him in the utmost astonishment, "yes, thou art the man! Thy modesty shall no longer conceal thee from the eyes of the people, which are now fixed upon thee. For though thou wert once an Israelite, my friend, thou art now one of the lost sheep which are found, and if thou hast not much temporal, thou hast a hoard of eternal wealth."

He addressed himself during the whole of this time, both by words and signs, to Ser Nastagio, yet the poor merchant could by no means persuade himself, against the evidence of his own reason, that he was the individual pointed out. Without stirring, therefore, from the spot, he somewhat reluctantly put his hand into his pocket, so far conquering his avarice as to prepare to bestow his alms in the same manner as the rest of the congregation. The first person to present his contribution was the author of the trick, who approaching the spot where the merchant stood, offered his alms, and, in spite of Ser Nastagio, dropped them into his hat, making a sign to the people expressive of his admiration at the poor man's modesty. And though the incensed tradesman exclaimed in an angry tone to the young lover, "I have a longer purse than thou hast ears, man!" it availed him nothing. The good priest pursued his theme without noticing Ser Nastagio's remark, except by saying:

"Give no credit to his words, good people, but give him alms—give him

alms; it is his modest merit which prevents him from accepting them. Yes, go, thrust them into the good man's pockets; fill his hat, his shoes, his clothes, with them, and make him bear away with him the good fruits of your charity."

Then once more directing his attention to the confused and angry merchant, he exclaimed:

"Do not look thus ashamed, but take them—take them! for believe me, good friend, many greater and better men have been reduced to the same piteous plight, yea, even worse than that you are now in. You should rather consider it as an honor than otherwise, inasmuch as your necessities have not been the consequence of your own misconduct, but solely arise from your embracing the light of truth and becoming a disciple of our Lord."

The priest had no sooner ended than there was a general rush of the whole congregation towards the place where the astonished merchant stood, endeavoring who should be the first to deposit their donations in his hands, while he in vain attempted to resist the tide of charitable contributions which now poured in upon him on every side. He had likewise to struggle against his own avarice, no less than against the officious donors of alms, for he would willingly have received the money, though he did all in his power to repulse their offers.

When the tumult had at length a little subsided, the incensed merchant began to attack the priest in the most virulent terms, until the preacher was almost inclined to suspect that he must really in some way have been misinformed as to the proper object of his charity. He then began to make his excuses, as well as he could, for the error into which he had fallen; but the lover's purpose was accomplished and the deed could not be recalled.

For it was soon reported that Ser Nastagio, the corn merchant, had that very morning been recommended to the charitable notice of the congregation as an example of true conversion from the Jewish to the Christian creed. This story was quickly circulated throughout the whole city, to the infinite amusement of all its inhabitants, more especially of the young lovers, who had now full leisure once more to contemplate each other's perfections, free from the observation of Ser Nastagio, who was never known to enter that church again.

The Crystal Globe

There were two lovers, both nobly born and beautiful, and passionately attached to each other; but they were unable to obtain the consent of the young lady's stepmother to their union, whose influence was all-powerful, which was the source of the deepest affliction to both. Now, it happened that there was an old spaewife who had access to the house, and soon perceiving the cause of the lady's sorrow, she accosted her thus: "Be comforted, fair girl, for what

you have most at heart will yet be brought to pass." Happy at hearing these words, so boldly said, the lady inquired how she could assure her of that. "Why, young woman," returned the old lady, "that is a gift, the gift of Heaven, to see into future things, so that your destiny can no more be hidden from me than many other affairs. To convince you, I will not only tell, but I will show you everything so clearly in a glass that you will have reason to praise my art. Yet we must choose a time when your parents are from home, and then you shall see a wonder."

The young lady waited somewhat impatiently until her parents went on a visit to a country seat. She then went directly to her brother's tutor, said she was going to have her fortune told, and requested him to accompany her, and stand by while she looked into the fatal glass. At first he tried to dissuade her, on the ground of its unlawfulness and mischievous tendency, such inquiries being frequently followed by very bad effects. His dissuasions, however, were in vain; she remained firm in her resolution, and by her earnest prayers even prevailed upon him to attend her. When they entered into the place, they found the old hag busily engaged in taking out her conjuring apparatus and preparing for her incantations. She seemed to dislike the appearance of a second person, and easily saw the slight estimation in which she was held by the lady's friend. Upon this she displayed a large blue silk kerchief, covered with figures of dragons, snakes, and other monsters, which she spread over the table, and upon it placed a green glazed shawl. She next brought a gold silk cloth, and finally upon this she laid a pretty large crystal globe, but concealed under a fine white silk covering. Then while making the strangest evolutions in the world, she murmured forth some unintelligible words; and this being done with a singular expression of awe, she approached the crystal globe, took it fearfully in her hands, and beckoning the lady and her conductor to the window where she stood, she pointed ominously to the prospect beyond.

At first they could see nothing, but gradually there appeared, as if rising out of the globe, the form of a lady arrayed in a rich bridal dress. Yet, noble as her features were, they had a shade of deep anxiety and sorrow; her complexion was deadly pale, such as no eye could rest upon without the spectator feeling a strong emotion of pity. The young lady beheld her own likeness, and shrieked with terror; for it grew larger and larger, as her lover approached her from the opposite side—not the noble and attractive being she had beheld, but with fierce and enraged aspect, calculated only to inspire dread. He appeared as if come from a sudden journey, both booted and spurred, and wore a grey mantle with gold clasps. He bore two newly-furbished pistols in his belt; one of which he seized and pointed at his heart; the other was directed at the lady's forehead. The spectators, though scarcely able to sustain the sight, saw further: he snapped the pistol held to the lady's temples, and they heard a low and plaintive echo in the distance. Such was the horror they then endured, that they stood riveted to the spot; until recovering a little, with weak and trembling steps they left the old hag's apartment, who

appeared almost as much terrified as themselves.

In fact, she had not herself foreseen the full extent of the impending evils to ensue. Dreading the consequences, she hastily packed up the fatal instruments of her art, disappeared, and was no longer heard of. Yet disastrous as such a destiny appeared, it was unable to extinguish the passion felt by the young lady for the object of her choice. Love was stronger than death, and her sole safety lay in the determination of her parents to refuse their sanction to the marriage. Yet, strange! she now more than ever sought to obtain it, not only by tears and entreaties, but by the most resolute threats and denunciations, if it were longer withheld. These, however, were met by still more determined and effectual measures, and her stepmother at length succeeded in compelling her to yield her hand to a certain court favourite who resided near and had long solicited her love. The day was fixed, and her sufferings were now truly pitiable, while the despair of her refused lover was equal to her own.

Her nuptials were to be celebrated in the most splendid style,—a throng of noble and fashionable persons, not excepting princes, graced the occasion. the bride was conducted in the princess's own carriage with six horses, attended by her nearest relatives, and by knights and outriders, followed by a grand procession. The rejected lover was not ignorant of these proceedings, and with the madness of despair he swore never to leave her alive in the arms of his rival. He procured a pair of the best pistols, intending first to kill the bride, and with the second to shoot himself. The place where he took his station was only about ten or twelve yards from the path by which the bride would have to pass in going to the church, whence he could perceive everything that passed. He watched the gorgeous array of carriages and riders, attended by an immense procession of people, approach nearer and nearer, seized his opportunity, and pushing his way as close to the bride's vehicle as possible, fired into it. But the shot passed too soon to reach its object, and only caught the head-dress of another noble lady who was leaning forward. The latter falling into a swoon, the criminal, while they were occupied with her, succeeded in making his escape through a back door of the house, from which he issued, while all hastened to afford assistance to the wounded lady. He next swam over a small river which obstructed his way, and eluded all pursuit.

The affrighted bride having somewhat recovered the shock, the procession was ordered to move on, and the nuptial ceremony was solemnized in all due form. But her heart was ill at rest, her thoughts wandered back to the images seen in the crystal globe, and the dreaded result stood fresh impressed upon her mind. Her hateful destiny too was before her; her marriage, indeed, proved unfortunate, for her consort was a harsh narrow-minded man, who treated her extremely ill. Yet resigning herself to her fate, she ever led a chaste and virtuous life; presented him with one lovely child, on which she lavished her tenderest care; but she did not long survive.

Lady and Kazi

During the reign of Sultan Mahomed Subaktaghin in Ghaznin, a man was traveling from Aderbaijan to Hindustan; when he arrived in Ghaznin, he was much pleased with the climate, so he decided to settle there; and as he had great experience in commerce, he went to the bazaar and became a broker and was very successful in business.

He intended to marry, and fortune being propitious to him, he entered into a matrimonial alliance with a virtuous and handsome young woman; by degrees his business also became more and more flourishing, and having accumulated much wealth, he was numbered among the richest merchants.

He wished to extend his transactions to Hindustan and sent goods to that country; but as he had no connections or intimate friends in Ghaznin who might take charge of his wife till his return, this thought troubled him greatly, and as he considered it the first duty of a respectable man to be on his guard on this subject, and not to hazard his reputation and honor, he determined not to start on his journey till he had provided an asylum for his spouse.

Now since the Kazi of the city was a man noted for his piety, virtue, and honor, he said to himself: "I cannot do better than intrust the keeping of my wife to so godly and honest a man, who is a magistrate and a churchman, and enjoys the esteem of the rich and the poor; let her remain in his house till I return from my journey."

He hastened to make his obeisance to the Kazi and said: "O President of the judgment seat of truth and piety, by whose talented and searching disposition the explanations of religious and secular questions are flowing, and by whose essentially holy authority and intelligence the commendatory and prohibitory laws are corroborated, may your righteous opinion always remain the guide of those who seek to walk in the strait way of piety. I, your humble servant, am an inhabitant of this city, and it is my intention to undertake a journey to Hindustan; I have a young wife, the leaves of whose modesty and virtue are bound up in the splendid volume of her natural excellence; but as I have nobody who might protect and take care of her, and also because she might fall under the obloquy of false tongues, I flatter myself that she might find a refuge under the guardianship of your lordship."

The Kazi placed the seal of acquiescence upon this request and said that he would take care of her. That man furnished his wife with all the necessary expenses for one year, delivered her to the Kazi, and started on his journey.

The lady spent her whole time in the house of the Kazi in prayer and devotion, and nearly a whole year had elapsed without the breeze of a single profane glance having blown on the vernal abode of her face, and without her having ever heard the bird of a voice in the foliage of her ears; till one day the Kazi unexpectedly made his appearance and looked at her, when he perceived her Leila-like beauty sitting within the black mansion of her musked ringlets, and her sweet tenderness mounted upon the palfrey of attractive-

ness and melancholy, the Kazi's intellect became troubled, and Ferhad-like he began to dig the Bistún of his soul, which was melting and burning in the censer of distraction.

He was anxious to make overtures against her virtue, but being aware of her whole nature and chastity, he durst not attempt it; nevertheless, when the wife of the Kazi one day absented herself to visit the public baths and had left the lady alone to take care of the house, he was so completely dominated by his unlawful passion that he threw skyward the turban of concupiscence and said:

"The desired game for which I looked in the skies,
Has now on earth fallen into the net of my good fortune."

The Kazi locked the door and commenced his stratagem by complimenting her modesty; and continued to address her in the following strain:

"Virtuous lady! The reputation of my honesty and piety has spread in the world and penetrated all corners, neither could the charms of the paradisaical Houris seduce my righteous disposition from the road of firm determination, or impel me to transgress the laws of purity; then why do you avoid me so much? If the absence of intelligence and of the knowledge of the true state of things keep your face veiled with the curtain of bashfulness, my obedience to the laws of God, and my fear of eternal punishment at the day of resurrection, prohibit me from allowing the fire of sensuality to be kindled within me.

"I would not disturb your peace even with the sinful glance of my eye.

"Be of good cheer and throw aside the veil of apprehension from your face, because there is no danger of sinning; and although it is against the law of God and the Prophet to exact services from guests, yet since you belong to the house and I am dependent on your kindness, I would request you to procure me some food, for I am hungry."

The woman placed the prohibitory veil of bashfulness on her face, and waited upon the Kazi with all due modesty; she put the meal before him and retired to a corner; the Kazi had provided himself with a drug which deprives of his senses anyone who tastes it, and said to the woman: "You know that three kinds of persons will be rejected from the mercy of God on the day of resurrection, and will be subjected to endless tortures; firstly, he who eats alone; secondly, he who sleeps alone; and thirdly, he who travels alone; and till now it has never happened to me that I did any of these three things; since I am now eating alone and anyone who does this has the devil for his companion, and to whomsoever this happens, his faith will be endangered; why should you not, in order to free me from the snares of the devil, defile your hands by partaking of this meal?"

He did not cease to invite her till she sat down near the table and helped herself to some food. The Kazi took this opportunity to throw some of the medicine into the plate; after the unfortunate woman had swallowed a few morsels she felt herself fainting, and wanting to get up from the table, her

feet refused to bear her, and she fell senseless to the ground.

The Kazi quickly gathered up the articles that were on the table and meditated worse things; when he suddenly heard noises on the outside; this greatly disturbed him, and he was much embarrassed where to conceal the woman so that nobody might discover the circumstance.

Now the Kazi happened to keep his money and valuables in a subterranean room which was situated exactly under the apartment in which he was. Nobody knew anything about this place except himself; he opened the trapdoor, thrust the woman into it and again covered the floor with the carpet; then he went out and saw that his family had returned from the bath.

The Kazi said: "Why did you all leave the house empty?" They answered: "We have left the wife of the merchant to take care of the place." The Kazi said: "It is two hours since I arrived at home and have seen no one; why do you trust such a person? She may have taken away something." They were all astonished and said that she was not such a woman, and wondered what had become of her.

While this talk was going on the husband of that woman, having just returned from his journey to Hindustan, came at that moment to the house of the Kazi to inquire for his wife. The Kazi said: "It is some time since your wife has left the house without giving us notice or asking permission."

The merchant said: "O Kazi! This is not the time to crack jokes; deliver to me my wife." The Kazi swore an oath and affirmed that he was in earnest. The merchant said: "I am too well acquainted with the nature and disposition of my wife ever to believe her to be capable of such a trick; there must be something else the matter."

The Kazi got angry and replied: "It is I who must be offended, you foolish man; why do you talk nonsense and uselessly insult us? Go and see where your wife is!"—As the merchant was greatly attached to his spouse, and the smoke of distress was beginning to ascend from the oven of his brains, he tore the collar of patience, and hastened to make his complaint to the Sultan, and prostrating himself upon the carpet of supplication he said:

"Oh, exalted and happy monarch,
May felicity be the servant of your palace.
The Kazi of the city has done me injustice,
Greater than the blast of a tornado of the west.
If it be permitted I shall explain
The injustice of that mean-spirited wretch."

The Sultan said: "Bring forward your complaint that I may become acquainted with it." The merchant said: "I am a native of Aderbaijan, and it was the fame of the justice and protection which the poor obtain at the hands of your majesty that induced me to settle in this country, and it is some time since I dwelt under the shadow of your majesty's protection. I had a beautiful and modest wife, and intending to travel to Hindustan, I committed her one year ago to the charge of the Kazi. Now I have again returned, but he,

being deceived by his covetousness, refuses to give up to me my wife."

The Sultan ordered the Kazi to be brought into his presence, but the latter, suspecting what would happen, suborned by the promise of money several vagabonds to testify, when called upon, that they had seen the merchant's wife absent herself from the Kazi's house three months ago.

When the Kazi arrived, the Sultan asked him what kind of a complaint the merchant had against him.

The Kazi said: "May the torch of your majesty's welfare be luminous, and the castle of opposition ruinous! This man has intrusted his wife to me and it is nearly three months since she went out of my house without giving any notice, and up to this time she has not come back; we have been unable to discover any traces of her."

The merchant answered: "This is contrary to the nature of my wife, and I do not believe it." The Sultan said: "Who are the witnesses?"

The Kazi answered that several neighbors and householders of the vicinity were acquainted with the fact, and wrote down their names; at a sign of the Sultan to a Chamberlain, these witnesses were brought in, and they confirmed the assertion of the Kazi.

Then the Sultan said to the merchant: "As the Kazi has established his assertion by witnesses, your complaint falls to the ground." Upon this the merchant retired disappointed.

The Sultan was in the habit of perambulating the bazaars and streets of the city occasionally, in disguise, to mix among the people, and thus discover what they thought of him. That night he left his palace according to his wont and walked about.

He happened to pass near the door of a shop where boys were playing the game of "The King and his Vizier." One of the children was made king, and said to the others: "I am king and you are all under my authority; you must not seek to evade my commands." Another boy said: "If you give unjust judgments like Sultan Mahomed we shall soon depose you." The other asked: "What injustice has Sultan Mahomed done?"

He answered: "To-day the affair of a merchant came before the Sultan. This merchant had confided his wife to the keeping of the Kazi, and he hid her in his own house; the Sultan called for witnesses, when the Kazi gained his cause by bringing into court witnesses whom he had previously bribed. It is a great pity that people should have the administration of justice in their hands who are unable to distinguish between right and wrong; had I been in the place of the Sultan I would very quickly have discovered the truth or falsehood of the witnesses of the Kazi."

When the Sultan had heard the conversation of these children he sighed and returned to his palace in great agitation of mind; next morning as soon as it was daylight he sent somebody to fetch the boy. The boy came and the Sultan received him in a very friendly way, saying: "This day you shall be my Lieutenant the whole day from morning till evening, and I intend to allow you to sit in judgment and to act entirely according to your own will." Then the Sultan whispered to a Chamberlain to

invite the merchant again to state his complaint against the Kazi.

The merchant came and did so; the witnesses were again called for, whom the Kazi again brought into court. The Kazi wished to take a seat, but the boy said: "Ho, Master Kazi! It is a long time since the leading strings of judicial power, and the power of tying and untying the knotty points of law, have been in your hands; why do you seem to be so ignorant of legal customs? You have been brought into this court as a party in a lawsuit and not as an assessor; it is the rule that you should stand below on an equality with your accuser, till the court breaks up, and then you should obey whatever its decision might be."

The Kazi went and placed himself near the merchant; then the merchant proffered his complaint, and the Kazi again affirmed that the woman had abandoned the house three months ago.

The boy said: "Have you any witnesses?" The Kazi beckoned to his followers and said: "These are the witnesses."

The boy called one of the witnesses and asked him in a subdued voice whether he had seen the woman? He said: "Yes." Then he inquired further what signs there were on her person, stature, or face. The man became embarrassed and said: "She has a mole on her forehead, one of her teeth is wanting, she is of a fresh complexion, tall and slender."

The boy asked: "What time of day was it when she went away from the house of the Kazi?" He answered: "Morning." The boy said: "Remain in this place."

Then he called for another witness of whom he also asked the description, and got the following answer: "She is of low stature, lean, her cheeks are write and red, she has a mole near the lips and she left the house in the afternoon."

Having placed this individual in another corner, he called for a third witness whose evidence contradicted both the others, and gradually he examined all of them, and found them disagreeing in everything.

The Sultan was sitting by the side of the boy and heard all; when the hearing of the witnesses was completed. the boy said: "You God-forgetting wretches, why do you give false evidence? Let the instruments of torture be brought forward that we may find out the truth." As soon as they heard the name of torture mentioned, they all offered to say the truth, and acknowledged themselves to be a set of poor fellows whom the Kazi had bribed with a sum of money and had instructed what to say; they also confessed that they knew nothing whatever about the woman.

The boy called the Kazi, and asked him what he had to say in this business; the Kazi commenced to tremble all over his body, and said: "The truth is as I have stated it." The boy said: "Our Kazi is a bold man, and his haughtiness hinders him from acknowledging the truth; the instruments of punishment ought to be made use of."

When the Kazi heard this, the fear of torture greatly distressed him, and he confessed the truth. Upon this the boy kissed the floor of good manners with the lips of obedience, and said: "The remainder of this affair is to be settled by the Sultan." The Sultan was

much pleased with the acuteness and intelligence of the boy, and ordered the Kazi to be beheaded and all his property to be given to the wife of that merchant. The boy was treated kindly and educated, until by degrees he won the whole confidence of the Sultan and became one of his greater favorites.

The Praslin Letters

On the 17th August, 1847, the Duchesse de Choiseul-Praslin, only daughter of the Marshal Count Sebastiani, returned from the magnificent Château de Vaux-Praslin, near Melun, to Paris, on their way to bathing quarters at Dieppe. The family alighted at the Hotel Sebastiani, their usual metropolitan residence, one side of which faces the Faubourg St. Honoré (No. 55), the other the Avenue Gabriel, Champs-Elysées.

On their arrival the Duke and Duchess parted, the former proceeding, in company with his daughters, to pay some visits; the later, with her sons, retiring to their apartments. It was by this time half-past nine at night.

About eleven the Duke returned, conducted his daughters to their chamber, and then descended to his own, situated in the rez-de-chaussée, and separated by a vestibule from that of his wife.

By midnight sleep and silence seemed to reign throughout the mansion.

At half-past four fearful outcries, compared by one of the hearers to the yells of a mad person, proceeding from Madame de Praslin's chamber, alarmed the house. They were followed by violent and irregular ringing of the bell; and Auguste Charpentier, the Duke's valet, and Madame Leclerc, lady's maid, hastily dressing, flew to obey the summons. Their attempts to enter by an antechamber at the foot of the great staircase were baffled, nor could their joint efforts force the door, which, contrary to usage, was bolted as well as locked within. Strange intermittent cries continued to be heard, and the terrified servants thought they could distinguish the hasty trampling as of one pursued, mingled with dull blows. Hastening round to another door opening from the grand saloon, they found that also secured within. In vain they knocked and entreated, "*Madame! Madame!*" There was no reply

They now rushed into the garden, into which the Duchess's apartment looked, but the casements were closed as usual. Arrived, however, at the end of the house, they noticed that the door of a wooden staircase leading to an antechamber which separated the Duke's apartment from his wife's—was open. The door of the dressing-room and of the antechamber opening into the Duchess's chamber were also open. The valet entered. All was dark and silent; but there was, as the man declared, a smell of blood!

More and more alarmed, Charpentier ran to the apartment of one Merville, valet de chambre of the Duchess of Orleans, and aroused him with an account of what he feared had happened.

Merville sprang from his bed, seized a large stick, gave Charpentier a

sword, and, taking a lamp, hastened to the scene of murder, through the doors that had been found open.

They found the body of the unfortunate lady, clad only in her night-dress, lying on the floor, her head supported on an ottoman. She was literally bathed in blood.

Horror-stricken at the spectacle, they staggered back into the garden, and when there observed smoke ascending from the chimney of the Duke's room. The windows were closed, and it now struck them as somewhat strange that, despite the alarms, the Duke had not made his appearance.

The next minute the two servants were joined by the porter, Briffard, and several other persons, and the party prepared to return to the house.

At that moment the Duke opened the door of communication between the saloon and the Duchess's chamber. He wore his grey dressing-gown, and appeared much agitated.

"What is the matter? what has happened?" he gasped out.

At the moment, a servant threw open one of the windows, and, admitting the light, exhibited the corpse of the unhappy lady—a mass of wounds and blood.

"My God! my God!" exclaimed the Duke; "what a misfortune! what a crime! Who has done this? Help! help! Bring surgeons."

Briffard's wife gently raised the body; others brought water to wash the wounds. It was thought by some that she breathed once or twice, but this was doubtful. The surgeon on arriving pronounced her lifeless.

The Duke, on hearing this, placed his hands on the bloodstained shoulders.

"Poor soul! poor soul!—what monster has done this?" he exclaimed. Then, flinging himself on the bed. he tore his hair, crying, "My children! my poor children!—who shall tell them they have no longer a mother? Poor Marshal!" (Sebastiani).

On the 24th of August the condition of the Duke was such that the Curé de St. Jacques and L'Abbé Bourgoin were summoned to his bedside, and administered to the dying man the comforts of religion.

After this he appeared calmer and stronger, and received a visit from the *grand referendaire*, to whom he confessed that he had taken poison as soon as he saw that suspicion rested upon him.

"But," remarked his visitor, "suicide in presence of such a charge is tantamount to admission of its justice."

The Duke was silent for a moment, then declared that no other person was cognisant of the intended crime. His speech was interrupted by acute pains

The grand referendary reminded him that the sufferings of the soul were worse than any that could befal the body, and entreated the dying man to seek some alleviation of these in expressions of repentance, adding that his family were willing to believe that the deed he had committed was wrought in a moment of madness.

The Duke raised his eyes to heaven, and murmured, half inaudibly, "Yes, yes, I do repeat it!"

Pressed for some further explanations, the grand referendary offering either to summon the Chancellor, or to be himself the recipient of any such avowals, the Duke became violently agitated; and, after a minute of silence,

answered that he felt at the moment too fatigued and suffering, but would willingly receive the Chancellor on the morrow.

It was impossible to question him further. He was, in fact, sinking rapidly; and some hours later, at half-past four, the Duke de Praslin breathed his last sigh.

The official report was completely affirmative as to the guilt of the unhappy man.

"The presumption," remarked M. Pasquier, "was but too well-founded. The Duke de Praslin has judged and condemned himself. Seven days and a half after sacrificing his pure and innocent victim, he has avenged her on himself."

The Duchess was interred in the vaults of the Château Vaux. It was a solemn and touching ceremonial, for the Duchess was adored by all the numerous dependents of the family, as well as the neighbouring poor for miles around. Her charities, never revealed in her lifetime, were found noted in a locked volume, in which she affected to record the expenses of her toilette.

The Duke was buried as secretly as possible on the night of the 26th August. At midnight a travelling hearse was brought into the garden of the Luxembourg, and up to the inner entrance of the prison. The coffin being placed within, the melancholy procession set forth, under the escort of a brigade of sergens-de-ville, passing by the Rue Vaugirard, through the Barrière du Maine. Through the dark and stormy night, it reached the Cemetery du Sud, wherein some labourers had dug a grave for they knew not whom.

In the morning those who visited the cemetery might have noticed a fresh mound in the remotest corner, shaded by cypress and yew, undistinguished even by the black cross that crowns the meanest grave. That was the last resting-place of one of the noblest peers of France, the Duke de Choiseul-Praslin.

We will now throw together, as briefly as possible, the letters of this most melancholy domestic drama.

It appeared that in October, 1824, Madame de Praslin became the wife of the Duke (then Marquis) of that name. In March, 1841, Mademoiselle Deluzy entered the family as governess. In this interval of seventeen years Madame de Praslin had borne ten children, of whom she lost only one.

If during that period there may be traceable in the correspondence of the young wife some slight tokens of jealousy, there was certainly nothing to indicate real uneasiness, or any want of harmony in the domestic circle.

Succeeding by the death of his father to the property of Vaux-Praslin, the Duke expended large sums in improving his magnificent domain; but with this new wealth and splendour, happiness seemed to take wing. The affection that had lasted seventeen years suddenly cooled. The Duke not only ceased to make his young wife the sharer of his plans and pleasures, he suddenly announced that each should occupy a separate range of apartments, and furthermore expressed his desire that Madame de Praslin should not herself any longer direct the education of the children.

It is to this period that this letter refers. Eloquent, impassioned, diffuse, as love's language frequently is, it is

the wail of a repulsed, but innocent and loving wife, whose only fault is jealousy—in such a case, another name for love.

"Ah, why," *she writes*, "my well-beloved, refuse to allow your mind and spirit to accord with mine? By this course you deprive our lives of their greatest charm. You call me 'exacting' because I desire to partake your troubles. You hide them from me as if I were a stranger; and to make me more completely so, condemn me to isolation and the sense of your indifference. How long will it take for me to follow this example? My heart would break long before it had attained that end. You do not like to see me suffer, yet you will afford me none of the consolation that only *you* can bring. I see that you yourself are unhappy. I feel that I have within me treasures of love and pity, to give you comfort, and yet you repulse me from you! Am I not the companion of your life—half your very self? entitled, therefore, to share your griefs and troubles, as well as your happiness and prosperity? Who *should* help and soothe you but she whom Providence itself has purposely placed at your side?"

It would seem that the reconciliation so touchingly courted was for the time effected. But it was only a brief interval of peace. Too soon reappears on the scene, the sad procession of well-founded jealousies, suspicions, wrongs, dissensions. Mdme. de Praslin evidently strove to disbelieve the suggestions of her own heart and reason; but the world would not leave her that solace. The scandal was too widely spread. The very servants knew the truth, and at length the pride of the outraged wife rose in open revolt.

The 20th May, 1841, witnessed a fearful scene of reproach and defiance. Words, never to be forgotten either by the speaker or hearer, were uttered, and Mdme. de Praslin, broken-hearted, retired to her own apartments.

"Do not be surprised, my dear Theobald, at my fear to be alone with you. We are separated for ever—you have said so. While I entertained any hope of a complete reconciliation, I was agitated, day by day, with alternate hopes and fears, which may, without doubt, have affected my demeanour. But now all is over! The sacrifice is made! You may be at ease. Nothing before the world, our children, or the household, shall betray to them that my happiness is gone for ever!"

One year and four months later is recorded another outburst of grief. But this time she is less the wife than the outraged mother:

"*Paris, September* 15, 1842.

"You cannot, Theobald, be conscious of your own cruelty, and the sufferings you inflict on me. Grief, believe me, is a slow and painful death. Ah, Theobald, how I loved you! How I loved our children! I had nothing else in the world. Now, nothing is left me of all I had, even your name. I live alone, abandoned, despised. I that have a husband and nine children! Another woman before my very eyes enjoys all that is most precious to me, and you expect me to be content! My God!

what crime has brought upon me such a penalty? Ah, Theobald, you had no right to deprive me of my children, to give them over to a woman without modesty, without principle, without discretion! Ah that you should be thus weak and blind!

"Mdlle. Deluzy is entirely mistress. Never before has the position she holds been so provocative of scandal. And what an example to give the young, to show them that it is a common thing to visit, at any hour and in any dress, a man's apartment, to receive him in one's dressing-gown, to arrange journeys, parties of pleasure, &c., &c., and to pass entire evenings alone with him! Has she not had the insolence to say to me, 'I am sorry, madame, that it is out of my power to mediate between yourself and your husband? But in your own interests I strongly advise you to treat me as your friend. No doubt it must be painful to you to be separated from your children; but seeing the resolution the Duke has come to with regard to this, I feel that he must have serious reasons for what he has decided upon.' Is it possible that your wife, who has been always pure and affectionate, should be subjected to such an insult from a hired governess whom you hardly know? What must I feel to see my children in the hands of one who avows her contempt of me, and establishes her ascendancy by causing me to be hated and repulsed by my husband?"

Another year has passed, and the Duchess finds herself in the same isolated condition.

The irritation still augments. Mdme. de Praslin begins to feel that as wife and mother she can remain no longer in the cruel and humiliating position assigned her.

[*Written in pencil; found at Praslin, in the Duke's secretary.*]

"You have the rare and precious gift of poisoning everything. If by your doubtful words and menaces you mean to imply that I disapprove of the control exercised in our house by a person I utterly despise, and who deserves neither your confidence nor mine, you are right. The very presence of a woman who so conducts herself near my children, is a shameful scandal. I know very well that you have other connexions (*liaisons*), and that *she* does not absorb you entirely—but, at any rate, she gives herself the air of doing so. I have the right to tell you that, in placing young people in the hands of a woman who disregards all appearances, and is entirely devoid of self-respect, you are committing a very grievous error. You are at liberty to act as you please; but you are, in fact, training up my children to expose them hereafter to the desertion and contempt that have been the portion of their mother. You abandon them to a woman who misleads you, and whose principles are most corrupt. So long as I had a husband, children, and a home, I was happy, and never dreamed of separating myself from them for a day. Now that you have deprived me of all, I own that I do desire to escape from what you have made a hell."

(*Later date.*)

"You will not be surprised, sir, if after such an insult, I refuse to remain

under the same roof with the person to whom I am indebted for it. For a long time I have been seeking to have some definite explanation with you. I have done all in my power to obtain it. You refuse. I therefore, in order to avoid greater scandal still, demand your permission to travel. During the interval you can reflect upon the course you will take. I shall not remain in Paris, but shall visit Lower Normandy. It will be supposed that I go to the sea-baths. The day will come, Theobald, when you will regain your reason, and comprehend your cruelty and injustice towards the mother of your children. I shall leave, if you think proper, the day after tomorrow. Endeavour to spare me a carriage. I shall not go by Paris. You have treated me like a guilty wife. God forgive you for it."

In a letter written on the eve of departure, the Duchess writes:

"Adieu, Theobald. If a sentiment of false shame hinders you from hereafter repairing the wrong you have done me, God is my witness that I leave you with my heart broken, but with ardent prayers for your happiness. I know that, however you may one day regret what you have made me endure, your ideas of dignity will not permit you fully to atone for it. It is, therefore, solely for the interests of my children that I implore you to open your eyes. They are in the worst hands. Farewell, farewell. Have pity on your children."

The year 1846 brought a gleam of sunshine across these stormy skies. On New Year's Day Mdme. de Praslin made a touching advance towards reconciliation with the person who had been the source of all her misery. She sent her a bracelet, accompanied with the following letter:

"*Paris, January* 1*st*, 1846.

"If it is forbidden us to lie down to rest without having forgiven our enemies, it seems to me even more incumbent on us to bury with the old year all causes of dissension and discontent. It is, therefore, in all sincerity, Mademoiselle, that I offer you my hand, desiring, in order that we may henceforth live in harmony, that you will forget any painful moments I have caused you, while I, on my part, will banish all remembrance of what has on your side occasioned me pain and sorrow.

"Let us, therefore, wholly resign the course hitherto followed, and thus be free to adopt another and a happier one. I beg your acceptance of this little pledge of an agreement to which I trust you will cordially accede."

Some months now elapse. Mdlle. Deluzy is at Turin, on a visit to the Duchess's eldest daughter, married in Italy.

Mdme. de Praslin replies to a letter from the governess in these terms:—

"*Praslin*, 25*th August*, 1845.

"I do not wish, Mademoiselle, to delay answering and thanking you for your kind letter, which afforded me lively pleasure, and which I could have wished twice as long. It was indeed time that news should arrive. Both my head and heart were becoming

disquieted with this long silence. Everybody seemed to be aware of that, for the factor himself, of his own accord, brought me my letters late at night. Among them were Bertha's and your own. The good Louis had gone to Melun, meaning to return to-morrow; but noticing among my letters the Turin postmark, forgot how tired he was, and ran back in triumph with the letter-bag to Praslin. You see, it is good to have friends about one, and this incident will show you how quickly they observed my anxiety. At last! *All's well that ends well.*

"We live shut in at Praslin; but, I assure you, not shut *up*. When it is fine we stay never less than four hours out in the park. My dear little things and I get on very well in our solitude.

"The council-general is on the 14th. I think Mons. de Praslin will be there. In his place, *I* should.

"You say that Louise and Bertha speak much of me to Isabella. It is perhaps to give me pleasure that you mentioned that. At all events, you have entirely succeeded. I wept with joy.

"Once more, dear mademoiselle, I thank you from my heart for your letter. Do not let it be the last.

"SEBASTIANI PRASLIN."

Mdme. de Praslin herself went to Italy, and on her return had an almost friendly explanation with her husband, when it was agreed that order should be re-established in the disturbed family. Unfortunately nothing was actually effected. Troubles reappeared, and a new and terrible crisis was at hand.

(*Found in the Duke's secretary.*)

"*Paris, January* 15*th*, 1847.

"MY DEAR THEOBALD,—Up to this moment I have waited for the fulfilment of your renewed promises. At my return from Italy, it was agreed that our domestic system should undergo a complete change. I feel it my duty to tell you that I could not return to Praslin without resuming my due position as wife, mother, and mistress, in the completest sense.

"The governess plan has never answered. It is time to renounce it altogether.

"Until my daughters are married I shall live constantly among them, partake their occupations, accompany them everywhere. My plans are made, and I am sure that, on reflection, you will find as much ground of confidence in trusting their education to a mother as to any governess. Masters can be had as easily at Praslin as at Paris, and recourse has already been had to them. I have foreseen, and can arrange everything.

"My father has, I know, offered Mademoiselle Deluzy a handsome pension. With this and the exercise of her talents she can subsist honourably in England.

"It is only on mature reflection that I have resolved to take this step. It is the advice of my father, and would have, I am sure, the assent of my uncle De Coigny, the representative of my mother. My hope is that all can be arranged between my father, yourself, and me, without the interference of anyone beside.

"You have often, my dear Theobald,

expressed your wish for this change, yet you as often shrink from making it. But now I rely on your assistance in this, as in everything else that concerns the happiness and welfare of our children.

"Fanny Sebastiani Praslin."

The wretched and demoralized nature to which these lines were addressed remained untouched by the appeal.

"Death comes too slowly," writes the unhappy wife, later, "but it is coming. I cannot bear this profound misery. I have neither husband nor children. My place is occupied by others. What are independence, luxury, fortune to *me?* I want my husband and my children. I liked dress when I went abroad in your company. I liked parties, attended by *you.* I loved all curious and pretty objects when we lived in harmony together; but now all these only offend and weary me.

"If you knew what I suffer when I see happy wives, and hear them talking of their households! You tell me to make new acquaintances, but what right have I, repulsed by my husband and children, to claim love and friendship from those who move in a circle of duties and affections of their own? Might they not ask, 'What can you ask of us, you who have a husband and nine children of your own?'

"*Cher, bon* Theobald! Do not curse me in my grave, for I loved you all—*all*—my poor dear cherished ones! Alas! must I die before you will be reconciled to me?"

The poor soul turns to the only ear that is never deaf to the sufferer's cry. She kneels before the Holy Book, and opens it at hazard. It is the second chapter of Ecclesiastes:—

"My son, when thou shalt engage in the service of the Lord, prepare thyself for trial and temptation, and strengthen thyself in the justice and the fear of God. Keep thy soul in humility, and abide in patience."

Refreshed by the sublime admonition, she rises and records her prayerful comment:—

"Take from me, Lord, if it be Thy pleasure, all my earthly blessings, the affections of all I love most fondly, and reunite us one day in Thy bosom. Save us, O God, to Thine eternal rest; and for this our fleeting life deal with it as Thou wilt. Thou knowest I speak from my heart. What Thou wilt *I* will. Give me only strength and resignation to abide Thy pleasure."

In June, 1847, Marshal Sebastiani, becoming aware of the point at which matters had arrived, and of the daily-increasing scandals, determined to interpose. A violent scene was the consequence; after which the Duke, Duchess, and the children, ceased to take their meals, as formerly, in the Marshal's apartments.

The annexed letter speaks for itself.

Marshal Sebastiani to the Duke de Praslin.

"Mons. le Duc,—You have caused me very great pain. You have accused me of indifference in having closed my doors to you and your family. Do me justice. I have done all in my power to avert this separation. I have risked discredit in forcibly shutting my eyes to scandals which have been

propagated in the newspapers, besides affecting disbelief of the reports with which all Paris is but too familiar.

"In recompense of my generosity, you have addressed to me reproaches as bitter as they were undeserved.

"I have never mentioned the name of Mdlle. Deluzy to any one. I am prepared to offer you certain testimony, which it is in your own interest to hear; but be just, and do not require from me what is manifestly impossible. If I cease to receive my daughter, it is that I may not embitter you more against her. You, therefore, it is who deprive me of the company of my grandchildren. I have not deserved this treatment at your hands.

"Try to understand the true interests of these young people. Have I ever done anything to you that could justify such conduct? But you are hardly yourself, and I can overlook it. Take counsel of your own heart, which is a good one, and will therefore do me justice.

"H. Sebastiani."

"When you are as old as I am, you may perhaps regret having used me thus."

The old Marshal had, however, resolved, cost what it might, to put an end to this deplorable condition of things. His daughter had spoken of a separation. That scandal must be spared if possible.

The cause, real or apparent, of the disunion was Mdlle. Deluzy. The Marshal sent his notary, M. Riant, to visit her, and explain to her the consequences that would result from her persistent residence in the family.

The Abbé Gallard also called upon her, and, in somewhat sterner language, pointed out the necessity for her immediate departure from a house in which her presence was a perpetual cause both of dissension and of scandal.

Mdlle. Deluzy acknowledged to herself that all was over. She consented to depart.

Great kindness and delicacy seem to have been displayed towards this woman, who, whether rightly or wrongly, had been the understood source of so much discord and suffering. Marshal Sebastiani settled on her a pension of 1500 francs, only requiring that she should quit France altogether.

The two annexed letters bear upon this point:—

"*June* 18*th*, 1847.

"Madame la Duchesse,—I should have desired to express by word of mouth the feelings which animate me, but under present circumstances I find the task beyond my power. Allow me then to postpone until a calmer and happier time the thanks I owe you for the generosity with which you reward my poor services. In quitting the children I love so tenderly your approbation afforded me a certain comfort.

"I accept gratefully the recommendations you are good enough to offer, and shall avail myself of them the moment circumstances permit. The failing health of my grandfather compels me at this moment to remain with him.

"I shall beg leave to make you acquainted with my after proceedings; and meanwhile entreat you, Madame, to

receive the expression of my profound respect.

"H. DELUZY."

Reply of Mdme. de Praslin.

"*June* 19*th,* 1847.

"MADEMOISELLE,—I regret much to hear that you are indisposed, and that in that state you incurred the fatigue of thanking me for what, remembering your devotion to my children, was nothing more than due. If regard for their true interests has hastened a separation which, a few days since, appeared to be much more distant, do not doubt but that it will only render me more anxious to serve you whenever you will afford me the opportunity.

"I hear that you propose to pay a visit to Lady Hislop. In that case I would offer you a letter to Lady Tankerville, who will, I am sure, unite with Lady Hislop in assisting your wishes to the best of their power. If you desire an introduction also to Mdme. de Flahaut and to Miss Elphinstone, pray say so.

"I remember that you wished to borrow a book of me at Praslin. I trust you will not refuse me the pleasure of offering it as a present.

"I can only repeat, Mademoiselle, that I shall be most eager to aid your wishes at any opportunity that may present itself, and trust that you will soon afford me that pleasure.

"S. PRASLIN."

The victory was won!—a sad triumph—alas! and pregnant with a fearful sequel.

Mdme. de Praslin experiences a sense of impending misfortune. The Duke has muttered threats, and his cold and gloomy looks inspire her with a secret nameless apprehension. Her journal contains the following passages, written on the eve of their departure for Praslin:—

"*June* 17*th,* 1847.

"I am obliged to tell myself again and again that in joining my efforts to those of my father to get rid of that woman, I have only accomplished a sacred duty. It has cost me dear. I hate *l'éclat,* but every one, and my own conscience also, approve the act.

"My God! What will come of it? (*Quel sera l'avenir?*) How enraged he is! One might suppose that *he* was not the most to blame. Can he shut his eyes to that? My God, open them!"

(*Last Extract.*)

"He had been tired of this woman for a long time, but *was afraid of her.* That is why he refused to dismiss her. It is clearly so. And now that he has got help his self-love revolts against it. That is his *real* cause of annoyance; and in conjuring up within himself a fictitious grief he hopes to soothe it. 'You have marred my whole life by this act.' These were his words, spoken with suppressed fury.

"In what haste he seemed, yesterday, to leave for Praslin, and to cut the matter short (*couper court de suite*)! Yes, I have, as they assure me, done him a real service, but, as concerns myself, *he will never forgive it—never! He will be revenged on me.* Day by day, hour by hour, minute by

minute, he will revenge himself for the good I have done him, for my having been right when he was wrong. The gulf between us will grow deeper day by day. The more he broods on this the more he feels conscious of his own error, the more will he wreak his vengeance on me. The future appals me—I shudder in the contemplation (*L'avenir m'effraie; je tremble en y songeant*)."

The rest is known.

One month later Mdme. de Praslin wrote the following paper. It was found in her cabinet, sealed, and marked—

"*Mes Impressions.*

"*July* 13*th*, 1847.

"It is long since I have written a line, but nothing is changed.

"She is to leave, they say, when we go to Praslin; in the meantime she exercises the same influence over both my husband and children. I can understand her conduct, if indeed she be quite devoid of shame, but *his* remains a mystery. He condemns the scandal, yet every day he supplies it with fresh food. He pretends that his relatives have been assailed, and makes public his quarrel with my father as the consequence of it. He breaks with *us*, while he is perpetually with *her*. It is the most incomprehensible character I have ever known.

"What *can* have given her this empire over him? It must surely be the influence of fear.

"Poor man! I heartily pity him. What a life! what a future! If at forty-two he can be so easily fooled by an *intriguante*, what will become of him when old?

"How I loved him once. He must, perforce, have been changed by these debasing associations; for, viewing him as he appears *now*, I cannot understand my own passionate love. It is *not* the same man; how suspicious he has grown, how apathetic, how irritable! Nothing animates, interests, or arouses him; no generous, exalted, or enthusiastic ideas seem to occur for an instant to his altered mind. All that could conduce to an useful, brilliant, happy honourable life was at his command. Now he cares for nothing—his country, his children, are of no consideration. He has fallen to be the *cavalier servant* of governesses, and is little better than their slave.

"I really believe that he holds to this woman (whom he has ceased to love at least these two years) because he fears that, once away from here, she would make his existence intolerable.

"It is strange; but I am convinced she attributes my pressing her dismissal to my love and jealousy of himself. He does not understand I now think only of my children. It flatters him; but I have no doubt that, if he had not believed my love inextinguishable, he would have treated me better. One might perhaps preserve a spark of love in one's heart for a man who, if harsh and cruel, is still capable of something great and honourable; nay, if he be but just and conscientious. But——

"Certainly there was good material in his heart and understanding, but the want of fixed moral and religious principles has been fatal to him; and his mental indolence gave the material passions way.

"How lonely he has become! He has scarcely one real, sincere friend. He has only connexions formed for pleasure, bonds that become galling chains, because he has not the mental strength to fling them fairly aside. It is frightful!

"How weak, after all, are men! How strange! he has blamed, oppressed, humiliated, abandoned *me*, for the sake of one whom in reality he does not care for! I loved *him* only, and with an ardour that amazes me when I recall it *now*. It may be, I know not, but possibly in his heart he may yet prefer me to these women that he both disdains and fears, while I on my part am disenchanted with *him*.

"Our position is both strange and sad. He has had pleasure enough, but little love; and now the love he might have had is drowned in tears!

"How will it all end? I cannot think there will ever be a complete reconciliation, desirable as that must be, for the children. He will shun me because he has done me wrong, and I shall only seek *him* through my devotion to our children. Some feeling within me revolts against making advances to a man, even my husband, while doubtful of his love.

"My God, Thou alone knowest all that I have suffered in hunger of the heart. If I have not fallen into temptation, glory to Thee, O Lord. Thou only art my stay. Oh, leave me not now, for, wanting Thee, I perish. My God, my God! support and guide me. I dread the future—the menaces he has uttered (*j'ai peur de l'avenir—des menaces qu'il m'a fait*)—the difficulties which every day arise.

"But Thou art at hand, and I have trust in Thee, that Thou wilt support the poor mother fighting this hard battle for her children. *Lord, help me!*"

These were her last recorded words.

Girl With Three Husbands

There was once a father who had a daughter as self-willed and obstinate as she was beautiful. Three suitors presented themselves, all equally eligible, and asked for his daughter's hand. He answered that his daughter should choose for herself, and that he would ask her which one she preferred. He did so, and the girl answered that she would take all three.

"But, daughter, that is impossible."

"I choose all three," repeated the girl.

"Talk sensibly, woman," said the father; "which will you take?"

"All three," said the girl again, and nothing could make her change her mind.

The poor father was much annoyed, but told the suitors that his daughter had chosen all three of them. As that, however, was impossible, he had decided that they should start out in quest of something absolutely unique of its kind, and that he who succeeded best should marry his daughter.

So they set out by different roads, "and a long time after" when they met at the seashore in a distant land, none of them had found anything especially beautiful or unique. In this dilemma he

who had arrived first met one day an old man, who begged him to buy a little mirror. He refused; for the mirror was too small and ugly to be of any use. Then said the old man:

"This mirror has one great virtue. Its owner can see in it whomever he wishes to see."

And having ascertained that this statement was true, he bought the mirror at the price demanded for it.

He who had arrived second met the same old man in the street. The old man asked him to buy a box of balsam.

"Of what use is this balsam to me?" asked he.

"Of great use," said the old man, "for this balsam has power to raise the dead."

Just at this moment a funeral procession passed. The old man put a little of the balsam in the dead man's mouth, and he at once arose, shouldered his coffin, and walked home. When the second suitor saw this, he bought the old man's balsam at the price asked for it.

As the third suitor paced up and down the beach in great perplexity, he saw a great chest floating toward him over the waves, and when it touched the shore up flew the lid and out jumped a multitude of passengers. The last, who was an old man, approached, and asked whether he wished to buy this chest.

"But I have no use for the chest," answered the third suitor, "unless I should make a bonfire of it."

"But, señor, answered the old man, "it has one great virtue. It will carry its owner and those who embark with him, in a few hours, whithersoever they desire to go. This is quite true, as these passengers will tell you, who, a few hours ago, were in Spain."

The gentleman made inquiries, was satisfied, and decided to buy the chest.

The next day the three met, and each was rejoiced to say that he had found what he sought, and was about to return to Spain. The first told how he had bought a mirror in which he could see the absent person whom he wished to see. To prove his words he produced the mirror and wished to see the girl whom they were all three anxious to marry. What was his horror when he saw her lying dead in her coffin.

"I have a balsam which will bring her to life," cried he who had bought the box, "but she will be buried and devoured by the worms before I can get there."

"But I," said he who bought the chest, "have a craft which will take us to Spain in a few hours."

So they embarked in the chest and in a few hours arrived in Spain and hastened to the town where lived the father of their lady-love.

They found him inconsolable for the death of his daughter, and begged to see her. When they entered the room where the body lay, he who had the balsam stepped forward and let fall a few drops between the lips of the dead girl, who rose smiling from the coffin, and turning to her father, said:

"You see, *padre,* I needed all three."

Confession

My name is Ella Jackson. I was originally from Baltimore, Maryland; am eighteen years of age. I went to work in the Treasury Department on the 5th November, 1862. I procured my situation through the Hon. Mr. Kellog, M. C. from Michigan. I have worked in various rooms in the department; am at present in the numbering-room, where I have been about six months. I know Mr. S. M. Clark, Superintendent of Currency Bureau. I also know Mr. G. A. Henderson.

Some time last fall, I think in September, I had a conversation with Mr. S. M. Clark and Mr. Henderson, in relation to them (Clark and Henderson) procuring two suits of boy's clothes—one suit for myself, and the other for a girl named Jennie Germon, who was then working in the Currency Bureau. Clark and Henderson were to furnish the male suits, and Jennie Germon and myself were to put them on and accompany them (Clark and Henderson) to the Canterbury, a place of amusement in this city, where females are not allowed, owing to the nature of the exhibitions or plays usually in vogue at that place of amusement. On the evening agreed upon between Mr. Clark, Henderson, Miss Germon, and myself to attend the Canterbury, as stated above, Mr. Henderson sent me a note written in pencil, in which he stated, as near as I can recollect, that the suit could not be obtained that night, but would be all ready by Monday noon; that C. could not go that evening to the Canterbury, but would join us during the evening and go to supper. That the carriage would stop at our door at seven o'clock, and we, Jennie Germon and myself, should come down alone and get into the carriage.

This letter was signed, I think, H. Mr. Henderson did call at seven o'clock, as arranged. We went down, got in and drove to Georgetown, back to the Capitol, and stopped at the corner of First Street and the Avenue, got out and walked to the Buhler restaurant, where we found Mr. Clark in waiting. We all had supper, which occupied nearly two hours. Messrs. Clark, Henderson, Jennie Germon, and myself, then went direct to the Central Hotel, corner of Sixth Street and the Avenue. Mr. Clark and Henderson went in and registered names on the hotel register. I do not know what names were registered. Jennie Germon and Mr. Clark occupied a front room; I think, the fourth floor. Mr. Henderson and myself occupied the next room adjoining. We all remained until about three o'clock, when Mr. Henderson got up and stated that he was going home. Mr. Clark, Miss Germon, and myself, between eight and nine o'clock in the morning, went to the Buhler restaurant, where we all got breakfast; came down stairs; Mr. C. left us at the door, and went away, and we went home. Miss Germon was then employed in the press division in Mr. Clark's bureau. Miss Germon was not discharged by Mr. Clark, but left of her own accord, as she was about to be married. Some time in the month of December, 1863, Mr. Henderson first mentioned to me the plan of going to Philadelphia. After Mr. Henderson men-

tioned the matter to me, I spoke to Laura Duvall about it; she was willing to go. A short time after Mr. Henderson mentioned the subject, Mr. S. M. Clark spoke to me on the subject, and asked me if I was willing to go. I replied, yes.

Afterward, Clark, Henderson, Laura Duvall, and myself, consulted together, and agreed to all go on the following Saturday. Miss Duvall and myself were to go on the three o'clock, P. M., train, and Clark and Henderson were to follow in the next train. Miss Duvall and myself went down to the depot, but found, on inquiry, there was no three o'clock train, and at once returned to our house, No. 276 Pennsylvania Avenue. Miss Duvall then wrote a note to Mr. Clark at the Department, and sent it by a boy named Willie, who lives at my house. After the boy had delivered Miss Duvall's letter, I sent one to Mr. Clark by the same boy, stating there was no three o'clock train, but that Miss Duvall and myself would leave in the five o'clock train. Mr. Clark sent back a reply to my note by the boy referred to, telling us to go on, and that he and H. would follow by the next train. Miss Duvall and myself took the five o'clock train. On our arrival in Philadelphia, we went to the Continental Hotel, and registered our names, Miss Duvall and Miss Percival. I did not like to register my own name, as I had relations residing in Philadelphia. I do not recollect the number of the rooms we occupied. We had no baggage, in consequence of which the clerk asked for our bills in advance; which request we complied with. Mr. Clark did not arrive until morning, owing to a delay on the road. Mr. Henderson did not come on, owing to the arrival of some of his friends from Baltimore that evening. Mr. Clark and Miss Duvall occupied a room together from about ten o'clock, A. M., until about seven o'clock, P. M. (this was on Sunday). Mr. Clark went out, and was absent until about seven o'clock in the evening, when he returned. Mr. Clark, Miss Duvall, and myself, were all in the same room, until about nine or ten o'clock, when we all went to the depot together. We left Philadelphia, I think, at eleven o'clock, and arrived in Washington about six o'clock, A. M.

I have frequently worked at the Department late at night; have also worked on Sunday, when Mr. Clark asked me to do so. Clark has very often asked the two Miss Duvalls and myself to *drink ale* in his private office; this has usually been done after eleven or twelve o'clock at night. I don't think I ever drank more than two glasses at a time in Mr. Clark's room. Don't think I was ever drunk in the Department. In the conversation I had with Mr. Clark and Henderson about going to the Canterbury in male attire, both Mr. Clark and Henderson informed me that they had seen Mr. Sinn, the proprietor, and made an arrangement for a private box. I was confident I could carry out my part of the programme.

In making this statement, I desire to say, that I have not done so under any threat, intimidation, or promise, of any kind or nature whatsoever; but knowing that I have done wrong, and have acted very imprudently both with Mr. Clark and Henderson, I desire to give a truthful and open statement of all my intrigues and improprieties with the gentlemen alluded to. E. JACKSON.

A Scholar of Castile

A NOBLE youth of Castile, a student of the law attracted by the long-continued and widely-spread renown of the University of Bologna, resolved to go thither, so that, after studying there, he might proceed to the doctorate. His name was Missere Alfonso of Toledo; he was young and of excellent parts, and, besides this, he had been left very rich by the death of his father, a cavalier of note. Wherefore, to accomplish forthwith his praiseworthy purpose, he furnished himself with an array of sumptuous books, rich garments, good horses, and suitable servants, and thus equipped, and with a thousand golden ducats in his purse, he took the road to Italy.

After traveling several days he found that he had left Castile behind him, traversed Catalonia, and had arrived in France. Having come to Avignon he determined to tarry there some days, either to rest his weary cattle or for some other need. He found lodging at an inn, and the next day he and his attendants rambled about the city; and, as fate willed it, while he was passing from one street to another he caught sight of a fair lady at a window. She was indeed young and very beautiful; but in his lover's humor himseemed that he had never before beheld her equal, and so delightful was the sight of her that before he moved from the spot he found himself taken with love of her in a fashion which no argument could gainsay.

On this account, regarding no more his virtuous intention, he resolved not to quit Avignon until he should, either altogether or in part, have won the lady's favor; and as he passed by her window continually, she, who was well versed in such business, perceived that the poor young fellow was so much enamoured of her that it would now be no easy matter to keep him aloof. When she remarked that he was young and beardless, and that, judging by his garb and his following, he must be rich and of noble descent, she determined to seize upon this dainty morsel forthwith, and to strip him of his last coin. Wherefore, in order to give him opportunity of speaking or sending word to her, she acted in the fashion which ships becalmed at sea follow when they despatch boats ashore to fetch wood; for, having let come to her an old waiting-woman of hers, well-informed and practiced in such business, she set her to ply her work by the window so that Missere Alfonso might easily see her.

The youth, who desired nothing better, approached the old woman and began speech with her, and before they parted each had learnt the private circumstances of the other. Then, when the crone had returned to her mistress, and after divers messages, had been sent from either side, they came at last to a clear understanding that the lady would grant him the favor of her love, and would await his coming the following night, and that he should bring with him the thousand ducats of gold which was all the money he had. At the longed-for hour the ill-advised youth, with his money in his pocket, betook himself to the house of the lady, whose name was Laura; and, after she had given him

joyful reception and caressed him beyond measure, he handed over to her the thousand ducats, wherewith she was marvelously content. Then, after making divers fresh plans whereby he might again take up the work he had begun, he returned to his inn, accompanied by his servants, who had waited for him at the lady's door.

She, who with delight amain and in such brief time had put her hand upon so rich a chance, perceived well enough that the youth was so deeply in her toils that Bologna and the study of the law had no longer any place in his thoughts. When the day was done, Missere Alfonso, deeming that next evening, according to their agreement, he would be received by the lady joyfully and with yet more kindly welcome, went at night fall to Madonna Laura's door. After he had given the signal several times, and had got back no sound to break the silence, he knew, too late, that he had in one and the same hour lost the lady, his honor, and his money.

So, having gone back to his inn grieving wellnigh to death, he spent all that night in vexation and anguish of mind. The next day, in order that he might have final proof of the trick which had been put upon him, he walked round about her house, and, finding all the doors and windows closed, and many other signs of like import, he knew that he had been betrayed and flouted by the consummate craft of this wicked woman. Having returned to his followers, such grief and desperation fell upon him that he was more than once on the point of plunging a dagger into his breast. However, restraining himself, lest a worse thing should befall him, he resolved to quit the place.

Now because there was not left in his purse a wretched solitary penny-piece wherewith to pay his host, he determined to sell a very excellent mule of his; and, having done this and discharged his score, with what little money was left to him he went on towards Italy by the County of Provence. All the way, however, he shed bitter tears, and was especially tormented by the grievous thought that, after purposing to pursue his studies as a nobleman should, he was now forced to make his way to Bologna selling and pledging his goods and lodging at mean inns, and after reaching his destination would be obliged to live there like a poor scholar. As he pursued his way in indigence and travail of mind, he came at last to Trayques, and took lodging in an inn where, by a strange and unexpected chance, the husband of Madonna Laura was tarrying that same night. This gentleman was an accomplished and graceful knight, a man of great eloquence and power, and was now on his way back from the Papal court to the King of France, by whom he had been sent as ambassador. He had already requested the host that, should any other gentleman arrive at the inn, he would bid the same join him at table, as is the fashion used by French gentlemen on their travels; whereto the host made answer that there was in the inn a Spanish scholar who, by his servants' report, was on his way to Bologna; but that this youth, by reason of a fit of melancholy which had come over him, had eaten naught for two days.

The cavalier when he heard this was stirred by his natural kindness, and resolved in any event to have the scholar to sup with him; wherefore, having gone

to him in person and found him sitting sad and distraught with grief in his chamber, he took him by the hand in very familiar wise, without making any other salutation, and said: "You must without fail sup with me." The young man, remarking the cavalier, and judging from his aspect that he was a worthy gentleman, straightway sat down to table with him, and when they had supped and dismissed their attendants, the knight asked Missere Alfonso who he was, and on what errand and whither he was bound; and, beyond this, if he could tell it honestly, to say what the cause of his deep melancholy.

Missere Alfonso, who for every word he uttered let forth two sighs, replied to the first of these questions as briefly as he could, but begged the cavalier that he would not press for an answer to the other. The gentleman, when he learned who the scholar was, and for what reason he had left home—and he knew likewise by hearsay that his father was a man of great reputation—was seized afresh with the desire to learn what accident could have befallen him on the way to make him grieve thus sorely. He went on inquiring, and the youth refusing to reply, till at last Missere Alfonso, without taking farther heed, told the whole story from beginning to end: who the lady was, and how he had been received; adding that he, assailed by excessive chagrin at the flout put upon him, and at his shame and the loss of so great a sum of money, had many a time come within an ace of taking his own life.

When the cavalier—thus instant to seek that which he neither expected nor desired—heard this, anyone who may have tested the truth of such a case will be able to say how great was his righteous sorrow, how he was as one half dead, and how vastly his mental torture surpassed that of the scholar. However, having discreetly suppressed his intolerable grief, giving some slight vent to his feeling the while, it occurred to him what he would do; so, turning towards the youth, he said:

"My son, you by your own words let me know how ill regulated has been your conduct, and how, like a silly boy, you have let yourself be gulled by this vile wanton; and certes, if I deemed that my chiding would profit you aught, I would never weary—supposing we were to live together hereafter—of reprehending you every day for your folly. But because I see you stand vastly more in need of actual help than of reproaches, I hope your present grief, together with the consciousness of your offence, will for this once be penalty enough. Therefore, take heart, and dream not madly of making the case worse by injuring your own person, for I will let this business end for you as though you were my own son. And, as you see that I am a traveler and a stranger in these parts, and wanting in means to carry out my desire, I beg you will not find it amiss to return home with me for a few days, so that you may afterwards in joy and contentment finish your journey, and carry out your original intent; because for the sake of your forbears, and of your well-born and noble seeming, I cannot let you go to the university in your present mood of set despair; and, besides this, you cannot, poor as you now are, live worthily as a gentleman ought."

The young man, astonished at such kindness, returned the cavalier as much

gratitude as the grief and injury oppressing him allowed him to express, and after some further discourse each went to his rest. The following morning they took horse early and returned towards France, and having covered all the distance by the knowledge of the country possessed by the cavalier, they arrived in Avignon that same evening; and when they had entered the city the gentleman took the young man by the hand and led him to his own house. The scholar not only recognized the quarter of the city and the house, but marked the lady as she came forward with lighted torches to meet her husband, rejoicing the while. Whereupon he quickly saw how the matter stood, and deemed that he must die straightway, being so greatly overcome with fear thereanent that he could scarce dismount. Nevertheless he got down at the request of his host, who took him by the arm and led him into that selfsame room where, not many hours before, he had sate, finding therein such brief pleasure, and such long-abiding trouble and loss. The lady, on her part, recognized the scholar, and, because the foreboding of the fate in store for her seized upon her, everyone will be able to imagine how great was the terror and the grief which possessed her. When the supper-hour had come, they all—the terror-stricken lady amongst them—sat down; and when the meal was finished the three of them—each one filled with bitter woe, although from different causes—sat on at table. Then the cavalier, having turned towards his wife, said:

"Laura, fetch me hither those thousand golden ducats which this man gave to you, and for the price of which you sold my honor and your own, and the honor of all your kins-folk as well."

The lady when she heard these words, deemed that the house was falling about her ears, and, like one dumb, stood without speaking a single word; whereupon the husband, looking upon her very sternly, took his dagger and said:

"Vile woman, if you wish not to die this moment, do as I bid you."

Then she, seeing how fierce his anger was and that no refusal was possible, went sorrowing amain to fetch the ducats, and, having brought them, cast them on the table. The cavalier poured them out, and taking one of them, gave it to the youth, who stood looking on in terror; for he feared every moment lest the husband should slay him and the lady as well with the dagger he held in his hand. But the cavalier said to him:

"Messere Alfonso, it is right and seemly that everyone should receive due payment on account of service rendered, and if my wife here, who has given you the pleasure of her person and duped you finely to boot, has betaken herself to such work for the price of shame, I am minded that you, who bought this merchandise for yourself, should pay the due price therefor."

Next he commanded his wife to take the ducat; and, when she had done this, he, marking how the young man was all shamed and afeared, and unable to look him in the face, and, certes, more in need of heartening than of rebuke, spake thus:

"My son, take back your ill-kept and worse-spent money, and beware in future that you buy not such base wares at so high a price. As you have left your home for a place wherein you

hoped to acquire honor and fame and renown, never waste your time and your health in lasciviousness. And, as I do not wish this night to trouble you with more discourse, I bid you now to get to your rest, and be assured, on the word of a true knight, that I would sooner work an injury to my own person than think of harming either you or your goods."

Then, having summoned his servants, the cavalier let the scholar take his money and withdraw to a rich chamber which had been got ready for him; and before he himself went to bed he prepared carefully some poisoned viands, whereof his wife made her last supper.

When the next morning had come, the cavalier caused to be brought out a fine ambling horse and divers other rich and noble presents; and after the young man had made a light repast and taken horse with his followers, the host himself mounted also and rode in company with him for some ten miles beyond the city. When he made ready to return he said to the scholar:

"My dear son, my mind is not yet easy for that I merely spared your life and returned your money; wherefore you must in addition accept these small gifts of mine, which, through hurry, I have not been able to make worthier, together with this horse, as a compensation for the mule which you sold, bidding you to have me in mind whenever you may use the same. I desire, in sooth, that for the future you should regard me as your father, and always depend upon me, whatever you do, and I, for my part, will do the same and look upon you as my son as long as I shall live."

Then he tenderly embraced the young man; and when he remarked that, by the flow of his tears and by the excess of joy over so great generosity, Missere Alfonso could scarcely open his lips to thank him, he, weeping likewise, bade him hold his peace, and thus, without being able to say farewell one to the other, they parted with tears and tender kisses.

The Secret

Nathalie de Hauteville was twenty-two years old, and had been a widow for three years. She was one of the prettiest women in Paris; her large dark eyes shone with remarkable brilliancy, and she united the sparkling vivacity of an Italian and the depth of feeling of a Spaniard to the grace which always distinguishes a Parisian born and bred. Considering herself too young to be entirely alone, she had long ago invited M. d'Ablaincourt, an old uncle of hers, to come and live with her.

M. d'Ablaincourt was an old bachelor; he had never loved anything in this world but himself. He was an egotist, too lazy to do any one an ill turn, but at the same time too selfish to do any one a kindness, unless it would tend directly to his own advantage. And yet, with an air of complaisance, as if he desired nothing so much as the comfort of those around him, he consented to his niece's proposal, in the hope that she would do many little kind offices for him, which would add materially to his comfort.

M. d'Ablaincourt accompanied his niece when she resumed her place in society; but sometimes, when he felt inclined to stay at home, he would say to her: "My dear Nathalie, I am afraid you will not be much amused this evening. They will only play cards; besides, I don't think any of your friends will be there. Of course, I am ready to take you, if you wish to go."

And Nathalie, who had great confidence in all her uncle said, would stay at home.

In the same manner, M. d'Ablaincourt, who was a great gourmand, said to his niece: "My dear, you know that I am not at all fond of eating, and am satisfied with the simplest fare; but I must tell you that your cook puts too much salt in everything! It is very unwholesome."

So they changed the cook.

Again, the garden was out of order; the trees before the old gentleman's window must be cut down, because their shade would doubtless cause a dampness in the house prejudicial to Nathalie's health; or the surrey was to be changed for a landau.

Nathalie was a coquette. Accustomed to charm, she listened with smiles to the numerous protestations of admiration which she received. She sent all who aspired to her hand to her uncle, saying: "Before I give you any hope, I must know my uncle's opinion."

It is likely that Nathalie would have answered differently if she had ever felt a real preference for any one; but heretofore she seemed to have preferred her liberty.

The old uncle, for his part, being now master in his niece's house, was very anxious for her to remain as she was. A nephew might be somewhat less submissive than Nathalie. Therefore he never failed to discover some great fault in each of those who sought an alliance with the pretty widow.

Besides his egotism and his epicureanism, the dear uncle had another passion —to play backgammon. The game amused him very much; but the diffi-

culty was to find any one to play with. If, by accident, any of Nathalie's visitors understood it, there was no escape from a long siege with the old gentleman; but most people preferred cards.

In order to please her uncle, Nathalie tried to learn this game; but it was almost impossible. She could not give her attention to one thing for so long a time. Her uncle scolded. Nathalie gave up in despair.

'It was only for your own amusement that I wished to teach it to you," said the good M. d'Ablaincourt.

Things were at this crisis when, at a ball one evening, Natalie was introduced to a M. d'Apremont, a captain in the navy.

Nathalie raised her eyes, expecting to see a great sailor, with a wooden leg and a bandage over one eye; when to her great surprise, she beheld a man of about thirty, tall and finely formed, with two sound legs and two good eyes.

Armand d'Apremont had entered the navy at a very early age, and had arrived, although very young, to the dignity of a captain. He had amassed a large fortune, in addition to his patrimonial estates, and he had now come home to rest after his labors. As yet, however, he was a single man, and, moreover, had always laughed at love.

But when he saw Nathalie, his opinions underwent a change. For the first time in his life he regretted that he had never learned to dance, and he kept his eyes fixed on her constantly.

His attentions to the young widow soon became a subject of general conversation, and, at last, the report reached the ears of M. d'Ablaincourt. When Nathalie mentioned, one evening, that she expected the captain to spend the evening with her, the old man grew almost angry.

"Nathalie," said he, "you act entirely without consulting me. I have heard that the captain is very rude and unpolished in his manners. To be sure, I have only seen him standing behind your chair; but he has never even asked after my health. I only speak for your interest, as you are so giddy."

Nathalie begged her uncle's pardon, and even offered not to receive the captain's visit; but this he forbore to require—secretly resolving not to allow these visits to become too frequent.

But how frail are all human resolutions—overturned by the merest trifle! In this case, the game of backgammon was the unconscious cause of Nathalie's becoming Mme. d'Apremont. The captain was an excellent hand at backgammon. When the uncle heard this, he proposed a game; and the captain, who understood that it was important to gain the uncle's favor, readily acceded.

This did not please Nathalie. She preferred that he should be occupied with herself. When all the company were gone, she turned to her uncle, saying: "You were right, uncle, after all. I do not admire the captain's manners; I see now that I should not have invited him."

"On the contrary, niece, he is a very well-behaved man. I have invited him to come here very often, and play backgammon with me—that is, to pay his addresses to you."

Nathalie saw that the captain had gained her uncle's heart, and she forgave him for having been less attentive to her. He soon came again, and,

thanks to the backgammon, increased in favor with the uncle.

He soon captivated the heart of the pretty widow, also. One morning, Nathalie came blushing to her uncle.

"The captain has asked me to marry him. What do you advise me to do?"

He reflected for a few moments. "If she refuses him, D'Apremont will come here no longer, and then no more backgammon. But if she marries him, he will be here always, and I shall have my games." And the answer was: "You had better marry him."

Nathalie loved Armand; but she would not yield too easily. She sent for the captain.

"If you really love me—"

"Ah, can you doubt it?"

"Hush! do not interrupt me. If you really love me, you will give me one proof of it."

"Anything you ask. I swear—"

"No, you must never swear any more; and, one thing more, you must never smoke. I detest the smell of tobacco, and I will not have a husband who smokes."

Armand sighed, and promised.

The first months of their marriage passed smoothly, but sometimes Armand became thoughtful, restless, and grave. After some time, these fits of sadness became more frequent.

"What is the matter?" asked Nathalie one day, on seeing him stamp with impatience. "Why are you so irritable?"

"Nothing—nothing at all!" replied the captain, as if ashamed of his ill humor.

"Tell me," Nathalie insisted, "have I displeased you in anything?"

The captain assured her that he had no reason to be anything but delighted with her conduct on all occasions, and for a time he was all right. Then soon he was worse than before.

Nathalie was distressed beyond measure. She imparted her anxiety to her uncle, who replied: "Yes, my dear, I know what you mean; I have often remarked it myself, at backgammon. He is very inattentive, and often passes his hand over his forehead, and starts up as if something agitated him."

And one day, when his old habits of impatience and irritability reappeared, more marked than ever, the captain said to his wife: "My dear, an evening walk will do me a world of good; an old sailor like myself cannot bear to sit around the house after dinner. Nevertheless, if you have any objection—"

"Oh, no! What objection can I have?"

He went out, and continued to do so, day after day, at the same hour. Invariably he returned in the best of good humor.

Nathalie was now unhappy indeed. "He loves some other woman, perhaps," she thought, "and he must see her every day. Oh, how wretched I am! But I must let him know that his perfidy is discovered. No, I will wait until I shall have some certain proof wherewith to confront him."

And she went to seek her uncle. "Ah, I am the most unhappy creature in the world!" she sobbed.

"What is the matter?" cried the old man, leaning back in his armchair.

"Armand leaves the house for two hours every evening, after dinner, and comes back in high spirits and as anxious to please me as on the day of our marriage. Oh, uncle, I cannot bear it any longer! If you do not assist me to

discover where he goes, I will seek a separation."

"But, my dear niece—"

"My dear uncle, you who are so good and obliging, grant me this one favor. I am sure there is some woman in the secret."

M. d'Ablaincourt wished to prevent a rupture between his niece and nephew, which would interfere very much with the quiet, peaceable life which he led at their house. He pretended to follow Armand; but came back very soon, saying he had lost sight of him.

"But in what direction does he go?"

"Sometimes one way, and sometimes another, but always alone; so your suspicions are unfounded. Be assured, he only walks for exercise."

But Nathalie was not to be duped in this way. She sent for a little errand boy, of whose intelligence she had heard a great deal.

"M. d'Apremont goes out every evening."

"Yes, madame."

"To-morrow, you will follow him; observe where he goes, and come and tell me privately. Do you understand?"

"Yes, madame."

Nathalie waited impatiently for the next day, and for the hour of her husband's departure. At last, the time came—the pursuit is going on—Nathalie counted the moments. After three-quarters of an hour, the messenger arrived, covered with dust.

"Well," exclaimed Nathalie, "speak! Tell me everything that you have seen!"

"Madame, I followed M. d'Apremont, at a distance, as far as the Rue Vielle du Temple, where he entered a small house, in an alley. There was no servant to let him in."

"An alley! No servant! Dreadful!"

"I went in directly after him, and heard him go up-stairs and unlock a door."

"Open the door himself, without knocking! Are you sure of that?"

"Yes, madame."

"The wretch! So he has a key! But, go on."

"When the door shut after him, I stole softly up-stairs, and peeped through the keyhole."

"You shall have twenty francs more."

"I peeped through the keyhole, and saw him drag a trunk along the floor."

"A trunk?"

"Then he undressed himself, and—"

"Undressed himself!"

"Then, for a few seconds, I could not see him, and directly he appeared again, in a sort of gray blouse, and a cap on his head."

"A blouse! What in the world does he want with a blouse? What next?"

"I came away, then, madame, and made haste to tell you; but he is there still."

"Well, now run to the corner and get me a cab, and direct the coachman to the house where you have been."

While the messenger went for the cab, Nathalie hurried on her hat and cloak, and ran into her uncle's room.

"I have found him out—he loves another. He's at her house now, in a gray blouse. But I will go and confront him, and then you will see me no more."

The old man had no time to reply. She was gone, with her messenger, in the cab. They stopped at last.

"Here is the house."

Nathalie got out, pale and trembling

"Shall I go up-stairs with you, madame?" asked the boy.

"No, I will go alone. The third story, isn't it?"

"Yes, madame; the left-hand door, at the head of the stairs."

It seemed that now, indeed, the end of all things was at hand."

Nathalie mounted the dark, narrow stairs, and arrived at the door, and, almost fainting, she cried: "Open the door, or I shall die!"

The door was opened, and Nathalie fell into her husband's arms. He was alone in the room, clad in a gray blouse, and—smoking a Turkish pipe.

"My wife!" exclaimed Armand, in surprise.

"Your wife—who, suspecting your perfidy, has followed you, to discover the cause of your mysterious conduct!"

"How, Nathalie, my mysterious conduct? Look, here it is!" (Showing his pipe.) "Before our marriage, you forbade me to smoke, and I promised to obey you. For some months I kept my promise; but you know what it cost me; you remember how irritable and sad I became. It was my pipe, my beloved pipe, that I regretted. One day, in the country, I discovered a little cottage, where a peasant was smoking. I asked him if he could lend me a blouse and cap; for I should like to smoke with him, but it was necessary to conceal it from you, as the smell of smoke, remaining in my clothes, would have betrayed me. It was soon settled between us. I returned thither every afternoon, to indulge in my favorite occupation; and, with the precaution of a cap to keep the smoke from remaining in my hair, I contrived to deceive you. This is all the mystery. Forgive me."

Nathalie kissed him, crying: "I might have known it could not be! I am happy now, and you shall smoke as much as you please, at home."

And Nathalie returned to her uncle, saying: "Uncle, he loves me! He was only smoking, but hereafter he is to smoke at home."

"I can arrange it all," said D'Ablaincourt; "he shall smoke while he plays backgammon."

"In that way," thought the old man, "I shall be sure of my game."

The Moor

One day the Conde Lucanor, speaking with his counsellor Patronio, said, "Patronio, I have a servant who informs me that he has it in his power to marry a very wealthy woman, but who is higher in station than himself. It would, he says, be a very advantageous match for him, only for one difficulty which stands in the way, and it is this. He has it on good authority, that this woman is one of the most violent and wilful creatures in the world; and now I ask for your counsel, whether I ought to direct him to marry this woman, knowing what her character is, or advise him to give up the match?" "My Lord Conde Lucanor," said Patronio, "if your man hath any resemblance to the son of a certain good man, who was a Moor, I advise him to marry at all ven-

ture, but if he be not like him, I think he had better desist." And the Conde then enquired how that affair had been.

THE HISTORY

Patronio said, that "in a certain town there lived a noble Moor, who had one son, the best young man ever known perhaps in the world. He was not, however, wealthy enough to enable him to accomplish half the many laudable objects which his heart prompted him to undertake, and for this reason he was in great perplexity, having the will and not the power to perform it.

"Now in that same town there dwelt another Moor, far more honoured and rich than the youth's father; and he, too, had an only daughter, who offered a strange contrast to this excellent young man; her manners being as violent and bad as his were good and pleasing, insomuch that no man liked to think of an union with such an infuriate shrew.

"Now that good youth one day came to his father and said, 'Father, I am well assured that you are not rich enough to support me according to what I conceive becoming and honourable. It will, therefore, be incumbent upon me to lead a mean and indolent life, or to quit the country; so that if it seem good unto you, I should prefer for the best to form some marriage alliance by which I may be enabled to open myself a way to higher things.' And the father replied, that it would please him well if his son should be enabled to marry according to his wishes. He then said to his father, that if he thought he should be able to manage it, he should be happy to have the only daughter of the good man given him in marriage. Hearing this, the father was much surprised, and answered, that as he understood the matter, there was not a single man whom he knew, how poor soever he might be, who would consent to marry such a vixen. And his son replied, that he asked it as a particular favour that he would bring about this marriage; and so far insisted, that, however strange he thought the request, his father gave his consent.

"In consequence of this, he went directly to seek the good man, with whom he was on the most friendly terms, and having acquainted him with all that had passed, begged that he would be pleased to bestow his daughter's hand upon his son, who had courage enough to marry her. Now, when the good man heard this proposal from the lips of his best friend, he said to him:—'Good God, my friend, if I were to do any such thing, I should serve you a very bad turn; for you possess an excellent son, and it would be a great piece of treachery on my part, if I were to consent to make him so unfortunate, and become accessory to his death by marrying such a woman. Nay, I may say worse than death, for better would it be for him to be dead than to be married to my daughter! and you must not think that I say thus much to oppose your wishes; for as to that matter, I should be well pleased to give her to your son, or to anybody's son, who would be foolish enough to rid my house of her.' To this his friend replied, that he felt very sensibly the kind motives which led to speak thus; and yet entreated that, as his son seemed so bent upon the match, he would be pleased to give the lady in marriage. He agreed, and accordingly

the ceremony took place. The bride was brought to her husband's house, and it being a custom with the Moors to give the betrothed a supper, and to set out the feast for them, and then to take leave and return to visit them on the ensuing day, the ceremony was performed accordingly. However, the fathers and mothers, and all the relations of the bride and bridegroom went away with many misgivings, fearing that when they returned the ensuing day, they should either find the young man dead, or in some very bad plight indeed. So it came to pass, that as soon as the young people were left alone, they seated themselves at the table, and before the dreaded bride had time to open her lips, the bridegroom, looking behind him, saw stationed there his favourite mastiff dog, and he said to him somewhat sharply:—'Mr. Mastiff, bring us some water for our hands'; and the dog stood still, and did not do it. His master then repeated the order more fiercely, but the dog stood still as before. His master then leaped up in a great passion from the table, and, seizing his sword, ran towards the mastiff, who, seeing him coming, ran away, leaping over the chairs and tables, and fire-place, trying every place to make his escape, with the bridegroom hard in pursuit of him. At length, reaching the dog, he smote off his head with his sword; he then hewed off his legs, and cut up all his body, until the whole place was covered with blood. He then resumed his place at table, all covered as he was with gore; and soon casting his eyes around, he beheld a lap-dog, and commanded him to bring him water for his hands, and because he was not obeyed, he said: 'How, false traitor! see you not the fate of the mastiff, because he would not do as I commanded him? I vow that if you offer to contend one moment with me, I will treat thee to the same fate as I did the mastiff.' And when he found it was not done, he arose, seized him by the legs, and dashing him against the wall, actually beat his brains out; showing even more rage than against the poor mastiff.

"Then, in a great passion, he returned to the table, and cast his eyes about on all sides, while his bride, fearful that he had taken leave of his senses, ventured not to utter a word. At length he fixed his eyes upon his horse, that was standing before the door, though he had only that one belonging to him; and he commanded him to bring him water, which the horse did not do. 'How now, Mr. Horse,' cried the husband, 'do you imagine because I have only you, that I shall suffer you to live, and not do as I command you? No! I will inflict as hard a death upon you as upon the others; yea, there is no living thing I have in the world, which I will spare, if I am not to be obeyed!' But the horse stood where he was, and the master, approaching him with the greatest rage, smote off his head, and cut him in pieces, in the same way, with his sword. Well! And when his wife saw that he had actually killed his horse, having no other, and now heard him declare that he would do the same to any creature that ventured to disobey him, she found that he had by no means done it by way of jest, and took such an alarm, that she hardly knew whether she were dead or alive. Then, all covered with gore as he was, he again seated himself at table, swearing that though he had a thousand horses, or wives, or servants, if they refused to do his behest he would not

scruple to kill them all; and he once more began to look around him, with his sword in his hand. And after he had looked well round him, and found no other living thing near him, he turned his eyes fiercely upon his wife, and said in a great passion, 'Get up, and bring me some water to wash my hands'; and his wife, expecting nothing less than to be cut to pieces, rose in a great hurry, and giving him water for his hands, said to him,—'Ah, how I ought to return thanks to God, who inspired you with the thought of doing as you have just done! for, otherwise, owing to the wrong treatment of my foolish friends, I should have behaved in the same way to you as I did to them.'

"After this he commanded her to help him to something to eat, and this in such a tone, that she felt as if her head were on the point of dropping off upon the floor; so that there was a perfect understanding settled between them during that night; and she never spoke, but only did every thing which he required her to do. After they had reposed some time, the husband said,—'The passion I have been put into this night has hindered me from sleeping: get you up, and see that nobody comes to disturb me, and prepare me something well cooked to eat!'

"When it came full day, and the fathers, mothers, and other relatives arrived at the door, they all listened; and hearing no one speak, at first concluded that the unfortunate man was either dead or mortally wounded by his ferocious bride. In this they were the more confirmed, when they saw her standing at the door and the bridegroom not there. But when the lady saw them advancing, she stepped gently on tiptoe towards them, and whispered, 'False friends, as you are, how dared you come up to the door in that way, or even to breathe a word? Be silent, as you value your lives or mine;—hist, and awake him not.'

"Now when they were all made acquainted with what she said, they greatly marvelled at it; but when they learnt all that had passed during the night, their wonder was changed into admiration of the young man, for having so well known how to manage what concerned him, and to maintain order in his house. From that day forth, so excellently was his wife governed, and so well conditioned in every respect, that they led a very pleasant sort of life together. Such indeed was the good example set by the son-in-law, that a few days afterwards, the father-in-law, desirous of the same happy change in *his* household, also killed a horse; but his wife only observed to him, 'By my faith, Don Foolano, you have thought of this plan somewhat too late in the day; we are now too well acquainted with each other.'

"And you, my Lord Conde Lucanor, if that servant of yours wish to marry such a woman, and hath as great a heart as this youth, in God's name, advise him to take her, for he will surely know how to manage in his house. But should he be of another kidney, and not so well know what is most befitting, then let him forego it, or run a bad chance. And I do further advise you, with whatever manner of men you have to do, you always give them well to understand on what footing they are to stand with you." And the Conde held this for a good example; made it as it

is, and it was esteemed good. Also, because Don Juan found it a good example, he ordered it to be written, and made these verses, which follow it:—

If at first you don't shew yourself just what you are,
When you afterwards wish it, your fortune 'twill mar.

The Rendezvous

I WAS sitting at the foot of a tree in a birch wood one day in autumn near the middle of September. A fine rain had been falling since morning, and a few scattering rays of the sun broke from time to time through the clouds; the weather was variable. The sky, covered with a thin white vapor, would suddenly brighten up in spots; and the clouds, as they opened for a moment or two, would disclose a blue and limpid sky that seemed like a soft, beneficent eye. I looked about me on all sides, and lent an attentive ear to the slightest sound. The foliage above my head was almost motionless; the sound that came from it as it stirred was alone enough to mark the season of the year. It was not the joyful tremor of the scarcely opened leaves, the long sweet murmur of the summer, or the cool, low rustling that is heard towards the end of autumn; but it was a sort of whispering babble, languid and scarcely audible. A gentle breath of wind at moments touched the tops of the trees. The interior of the wood, which was filled with dampness, wore a different look each moment as the sun shone out or went behind a cloud. Sometimes the full rays of the sun suddenly filled the woods with a gay resplendency; the slender trunks of the birches, standing a little apart from each other, assumed all at once the sheen of white satin; the little leaves that strewed the ground were enamelled with a thousand different tints and glistened like the finest gold. The graceful stems of the tall feathery ferns, which were already clothed in the rich hues of autumn, and which are not excelled by the grape in full maturity, crossed and intertwined in innumerable shapes under my eyes. But the sun went in, and everything in the wood straightway took a bluish tint; the brilliant hues disappeared; the trunks of the trees turned to a dull white like that of the new-fallen snow whose surface has not yet been touched by the cold rays of the winter sun. Then a fine and almost imperceptible rain furtively invaded the wood and spread through them with its low murmur. The leaves of the birches were still for the most part green, but of a green already very pale; here and there could be distinguished a few new leaves all red or of a golden yellow. Then it was a sight to see them kindle, as a sunbeam glided in, flecking in its course with many colors the network of little dripping branches through which it passed. Not a bird was singing; they remained crouched in silence under the leaves; the finch alone at times uttered its mocking cry that echoed through the silence like the sound of a steel bell.

Before reaching this wood of birches I had passed through a forest of mag-

nificent aspens. I confess I do not like these trees with their pale lilac bark and grayish, metallic-looking verdure that they spread out like a trembling fan; I do not like the constant swaying of their dirty round leaves, awkwardly attached to their long stems. The aspen is beautiful only on certain summer evenings when, towering from a plain of bushes, it catches the rays of the setting sun; it sparkles and trembles; a yellow and reddish light inundates it from top to bottom. The aspen pleases me too in clear, windy weather. It rustles and sways in the gusts, and each leaf carried out by the motion seems for the moment to separate and take flight into the fields about. But generally I dislike aspens; and it was for that reason that I had passed through the first woods without stopping, and had taken refuge under a birch whose lower branches were but a short distance from the ground and therefore afforded me a shelter from the rain. After admiring for a time the spectacle that was before me, I ended by falling into that calm deep sleep that is vouchsafed only to sportsmen.

I do not know just how long I slept, but when I awoke the whole interior of the woods was filled with sunlight, and the azure of the sky that pierced everywhere through the foliage seemed to sparkle with light. The clouds had disappeared before the puffs of a capricious wind. The storm had cleared away, and the air had that peculiar dry freshness that fills the heart with a feeling of relief, and almost always announces that a calm clear evening is to succeed a rainy day. I was about to arouse myself in order to continue my sport, when my eye lighted on a human form that was resting motionless in the woods. I looked carefully; it was a young peasant-girl. She was about twenty feet from me, with her head bent forward in a pensive manner and her hands resting negligently on her knees; one of them was half opened and almost entirely concealed by a large nosegay of wild flowers. The breast of the young dreamer was heaving, and at each movement the flowers slipped over her striped skirt. The white waist that she wore was closed at the throat and wrists, and clung to her figure in short soft folds; a double row of large yellow pearls went round her neck and fell upon her breast. She was pretty. Her light brown hair was divided into two coils, carefully smoothed and supported by a very narrow red band that surmounted a forehead like ivory. The rest of her face was covered with that golden tan that is peculiar to fine delicate skins. I could not make out her eyes, for she kept them cast down; but I remarked her long eyelashes, her delicately arched eyebrows, and her humid lids; on one of her cheeks was the trace of a tear that had stopped at her pale lips. Her nose was a trifle thick and short, but it was in no way out of keeping with the rest of her features, which, as I have remarked, were very pleasing. The expression that animated them was full of charm; it indicated the gentleness, the modesty, and the naïve melancholy of a child that cannot yet reason about its griefs. It was easy to see that she was waiting for some one. A slight crackling was heard in the woods, and she immediately raised her head and looked about; then I saw shine through the transparent shade that surrounded her, her eyes, limpid and

timorous as those of a gazelle. She listened attentively for a few moments, with eyes turned in the direction of the crackling, sighed, then slowly turned her head, and, bending it lower than before, began to sort carelessly the flowers on her knees. Her eyelids were red; a bitter smile crossed her lips; and another tear escaped from her long lashes and glided glistening down her cheek.

About half an hour passed in this way. The poor girl did not stir from the spot; at times she would move her arms sadly—and listen. Again something stirred in the woods; she trembled. The sound continued; it became more distinct. It came nearer, and I perceived that it was made by some one walking at a rapid pace. The girl drew herself up and appeared frightened; her watchful look seemed to tremble, but it soon lit up with hope. A man was seen advancing quickly through the thicket. As soon as she was reassured the color mounted suddenly to her cheeks and a joyous smile spread over her lips; but she fell back almost immediately pale and agitated, and remained so until the man who was approaching stopped by her side; then she lifted to him a look tender, fearful, and well-nigh supplicating.

Remaining crouched in my hiding-place, I examined this man attentively, and the impression he produced upon me was not at all agreeable. He was, to judge from appearances, the favorite valet of some rich young proprietor of the neighborhood. His dress betrayed his pretensions to good taste and elegant negligence; he wore a bronze-colored short top-coat, buttoned to the throat,—probably a piece of his master's cast-off clothing,—a pink-colored cravat with yellow ends, and a cap of black velvet with a gold band and a vizor coming down close over his forehead. The rounded collar of his white shirt cut his cheeks pitilessly and reached to his ears; his starched cuffs covered half his fingers, which were red and shapeless; but he had on several rings of gold and silver ornamented with small turquoises. His red, impudent face was one of those that, as far as I could make it out, are to men insupportable, but unfortunately, it must be said, frequently enough charm women. He evidently endeavored to give to his rather coarse features an expression of scornful indifference. He was continually winking his light gray eyes, which, but for this, were already almost imperceptible. He assumed an air of superiority, lowered the corners of his mouth, yawned affectedly, stroked in an off-hand way the reddish curls of his carefully arranged hair, and twisted the little yellow hairs that bristled on his upper lip; in a word, he gave himself airs of the most ridiculous affectation. He had put on these affected manners as soon as he saw the young peasant waiting for him. When he had drawn slowly near her with measured steps, he stopped, shrugged his shoulders, thrust his hands into the pockets of his top-coat, and after honoring the poor girl with a passing, indifferent glance, he sat himself with deliberation at her side.

"Well," he said with a yawn, continuing to look in the other direction, and stretching one of his legs, "have you been here long?"

The girl remained a few moments without power to answer.

"Yes, I have, Victor Alexandritch," she said at length in a low voice.

"Ah," he replied, taking off his cap and passing his hand gravely through his thick hair that grew almost down to his eyebrows; then carefully putting his cap on again, and looking about him with an air of importance. "Yes, I forgot. Besides, it rained, you know." At this he yawned. "I have an affair that worries me"; and he yawned again. "I don't know what to do about it, and the master is impatient. We start to-morrow."

"To-morrow?" exclaimed the girl, regarding him with a look of alarm.

"Yes, to-morrow. But come," he resumed angrily, seeing that the girl trembled and bent her head down, "I beg of you, Akoulina, not to cry; you know that I can't stand it." As he said this he wrinkled his flat nose with a frown. "If you are going to take on so, I shall leave. How ridiculous you are, cry-baby!"

"I won't cry," replied Akoulina quickly, with an effort to restrain her tears. "Then you go to-morrow," she continued after a pause. "God only knows when we shall see each other again, Victor Alexandritch."

"We shall see each other again," he replied; "don't worry about that. If it is not next year, it will be some time. I believe my master wants to go into service at St. Petersburg," he continued carelessly, speaking a little through his nose. "Perhaps we shall go abroad."

"You will forget me, Victor Alexandritch," said Akoulina sadly.

"No; why should I? I shall not forget you. But you must be reasonable, and not play the fool. Obey your father. No, I won't forget you; don't worry about that." And he yawned again, stretching himself at full length.

"Don't forget me, Victor Alexandritch," she continued in a supplicating tone. "You know how I have loved you; and I have given myself all to you. Obey my father, Victor Alexandritch? What would you have me do?"

"What?" he replied, still lying on his back, with his arm under his head, and his voice seemed to come from his stomach.

"You know very well, Victor Alexandritch; you know very well—" And she did not finish.

Instead of answering, Victor began to play with the steel charms that hung from his watch-chain.

"You are an intelligent girl, Akoulina," he said at length. "That is why I beg you not to be foolish. I wish you well, do you understand? No, you are not a fool; you are not entirely a peasant; your mother, too, has not always been a peasant. But you have, however, no education; so you must listen carefully when I give you advice."

"You frighten me, Victor Alexandritch."

"Now what folly that is, my dear! Is there really anything to be frightened about? But what have you there?" he asked, moving nearer to her. "Flowers?"

"Yes," said Akoulina sadly, "there is some field-milfoil," she continued, brightening a little; "it is good for calves. There is some plantain; it cures king's evil. See what a queer little flower that is; I never saw one like it. Here are some germanders, and besides them are violets. This is for you," she added, holding up a little bunch of bluets tied with a bit of grass. "Do you want them?"

The young valet reached out his hand and took the nosegay; he smelt

of the flowers unconcernedly, and began to crush them between his fingers, lifting his eyes towards the sky with a thoughtful, important air. Akoulina looked at him, and there was in her eyes an expression of tenderness, devotion and love that was truly touching. One could see that the fear of displeasing him alone stopped her tears; but that she was taking leave of him and admiring him for the last time. As for him, he remained stretched out like a sultan, and seemed to receive her homage with a truly noble condescension. I confess that his red face—whose look of assumed indifference could not conceal a feeling of satisfied self-conceit—inspired me with a profound disgust. Akoulina was so pretty at that moment! She had opened her heart and abandoned herself entirely to him; while he—he let the bunch of flowers drop upon the grass, took from the pocket of his coat an eye-glass with a bronze setting, and tried to fix it in his eye; but it was in vain that he scowled, and screwed up his cheek, and twisted his nose—the glass would fall into his hand.

"What have you there?" asked the girl with a look of astonishment.

"An eye-glass," he replied.

"What is it for?"

"To see better with."

"Let me try it."

Victor looked annoyed, but he handed the eye-glass to her.

"Be careful not to break it."

"Don't be afraid; I shan't break it." She put the glass timidly to her right eye. "I can't see anything," she said naïvely.

"You must shut your eye," he said to her with the air of a dissatisfied master. She shut the eye to which she had put the glass. "Not that one, idiot, the other," exclaimed Victor; and before she had time to do as he said, he snatched the glass away from her.

Akoulina turned red, gave a little laugh, and then looked away.

"It does not seem to have been made for you," she said to him.

"I should think so!"

The poor girl gave a deep sigh.

"Ah, Victor Alexandritch," she continued suddenly, "how sad we shall be when you are no longer here!"

Victor wiped the glass upon the skirt of his coat and put it back into his pocket.

"Oh, no doubt," he said at length, "at first." He placed his hand upon her shoulder in a patronizing manner; she took it gently and kissed it. "Oh, no doubt," he continued, smiling with a satisfied air. "You are a good girl; but what is there to be done? Judge for yourself. We can't stay here forever, my master and I. Here's winter coming on, and you know that winter is insupportable in the country. At Petersburg it is another affair altogether. There there are wonders that you, poor girl, cannot imagine even in your dreams; houses, streets, society, education,—everything, in short." Akoulina listened eagerly, with her lips half open like a child's. "But after all," he added, rolling over on the grass, "what is the use of talking to you about all that? You can't understand me."

"Why do you think that, Victor Alexandritch?" she said. "I understand you; I understand you perfectly."

"Indeed, is that so?"

Akoulina dropped her eyes. "At one time you did not speak to me in that

way, Victor Alexandritch," she replied, without raising her head.

"At one time," he said with a gesture of impatience." "But it is time for me to go"; and he leaned upon his elbow.

"Stay a little longer," said Akoulina in a supplicating voice.

"What for? I have already said good-by."

"Stay," repeated Akoulina.

Victor lay back again and began to whistle. Akoulina still looked at him; but I could see that her breast was heaving and that her lips trembled. Her pale cheeks colored slightly.

"Victor Alexandritch," she exclaimed at last in a heart-rending voice, "it is very mean of you, Victor Alexandritch. I call God to witness."

"What do you mean by that?" he said with a frown.

He leaned on his elbow and turned his face towards her.

"It is very mean of you, Victor Alexandritch. You don't even say a single kind word to me before leaving me, poor deserted woman that I am."

"What would you have me say?"

"How should I know? You know better than I, Victor Alexandritch. Here you are leaving me, and you don't even say— What have I done to be treated so?"

"You're a strange girl. What do you want?"

"Not even a single word?"

"Come, you're raving," he said angrily, and he stood up.

"Don't be angry with me," she said, restraining her tears.

"I am not angry with you; but I tell you you are a little fool. What would you have me do? You know I can't marry you. What do you want, then? Tell me." He craned his neck and spread open his fingers as if he was waiting for an answer.

"Nothing; I ask nothing," she stammered in reply, timorously putting her trembling hands out to him. "You might have said a single little word to me." But she could contain herself no longer; a torrent of tears burst from her eyes.

"Now she's off again," said Victor, calmly pushing his cap down over his eyes.

"I want nothing," she continued, sobbing, with her face hidden in her hands. "But what will my family say? How will they treat me? What will become of me? Poor deserted creature that I am? I am to be given to a man that I do not love!"

"Go on, go on," said Victor in a low voice, becoming impatient.

"And he won't even say a single word to me—not one! If he would but speak like this: 'Akoulina—' " But she could not finish. She fell on the grass on her face and wept bitterly. Her whole body shook convulsively. Now and then her head would heave. Despair, that she had until then restrained, gained complete mastery of her, and she abandoned herself to it. Victor remained some moments watching her; then he shrugged his shoulders, turned about and walked rapidly away.

After a short time, Akoulina became calmer. She lifted her head, rose quickly, glanced about her, and clasped her hands. She wanted to run after him, but her legs failed her, and she sank upon her knees. I could no longer restrain myself, but rushed towards her. No sooner did she see me, however, than she uttered a little cry and disappeared

behind the trees, leaving her flowers scattered over the grass.

I stopped, and, picking up the bunch of bluets, left the woods and went out into the plain. The sun, which already touched the horizon, had become much less resplendent and was no longer brilliant; but it diffused a pale, even light. There remained at the most but an hour of daylight, and yet the first tints of the twilight could scarcely be distinguished. A fitful breeze reached me as I passed over the dry, yellow glebe that covered the fields. The little withered leaves that it picked up were wafted hurriedly across the road that bordered the wood; the trees that rose like a wall on one side rustled sadly as they felt its breath. The brownish grass, the little bushes, and even the smallest straws were covered with those innumerable gossamers that fill the air in autumn. I stopped, and a feeling of sadness came over me. Nature still retained some traces of freshness; but it was the last smile which already presaged the horrors of the winter that was coming on with grand strides. Above at a great height a crow flew heavily through the air; it turned its head and, eyeing me askance, passed into the woods, uttering at intervals its lugubrious caw. A large flight of pigeons, a sign of autumn, appeared in the direction of the farm-buildings, and, forming suddenly in a column, settled down on the fields. The rolling of an empty wagon was heard behind a bare hillock.

I regained the house; but the memory of the poor Akoulina remained fresh in my mind. I have still the bunch of bluets, although they are long since faded.

Renunciation

Josefina, the daughter of the *alcalde* of Copey was a good, sensible young woman. The poor folk said she had a heart of gold. Neither was she lacking in culture, for she could recite long pieces of verse and play vaporous nocturnes on the piano. As to her beauty, of that there could be no question. Just imagine a purely, softly molded face, brown eyes whose glance had the vague tenderness we sometimes note in near-sighted orbs, small hands, and fine teeth. In short, she was a perfect beauty.

As she had been so bountifully endowed by nature, the town gossips wonderingly asked one another why she had never found a husband.

Every now and then she could be seen tripping along the sidewalk from the *alcaldia* to the shops, and from the shops to the rectory, arm in arm with some girl friend, both daintily attired and evidently much preoccupied. Josefina was the spokeswoman as they went from shop to shop, making the clerks ransack the shelves for folds of fine linen suitable for napery, or for white slippers which her busy hands would carefully match with a sample of muslin.

If any neighbor happened to greet her and ask her slyly whether there

were any signs of a sudden wedding up at the *alcaldia,* she would reply in the most matter-of-fact way in the world, and with a smile that displayed her pretty teeth:

"Oh no! It is my friend here who is going to get married. Yesterday it was Estefania, today it is Maria, tomorrow it will be Teresa's turn. All this running around is purely disinterested."

Whereupon Josefina's companion would smile, her face blushing crimson. And it was always the same story, she was always busied with bridal *tulles,* which were never destined to adorn her own pretty, trim little form. She was always listening to wedding announcements in which her own name never figured.

After the group of girls who had graduated with her from college came another set, bashful and smiling, who, like the first, were off to build their little nests soon to resound with the happy laughter of Childhood. Then still another gay garland of girls had come on the scene, girls whom she could remember as children, playing on the floor or clinging to her skirts. She seemed to ignore the passage of time, transferring her friendship from one set to another as the girls grew up around her. At the balls she would greet with a friendly nod some of her contemporaries, now grave matrons, chaste and sedate in their sober gowns.

Her father, the sturdy, bull-necked Don Cristobal, who belonged to the petty gentry, would often lay down his pen after covering a page of his ledger with a networth of figures, and think over the strange fate of his daughter, who was so much admired, but for whose hand no one ventured to ask. However, as the good man's intelligence did not reach far beyond the files and records of his office, he ended by gladly accepting things as they were, for, in this way, he would not be forced to part with "the little one," the precious heritage left him by his poor rustic beauty of a wife, the joy of his young days.

In truth, Josefina's lot was that of many provincial girls of good family, whom a strict father provides with a teacher of history, literature, or design, and then takes up to the capital once every three months to see the dentist, or perhaps to hear some old opera. Attractive enough to claim the attention of the young townsmen, who came together each evening at the barber's shop or in the Casino, she was overlooked by the elegant youths who found their way to Copey in the summer season to test the effects of its famous waters on a disordered liver or a confirmed dyspepsia.

The young townsmen spoke of her with a certain half-ironical respect, tinged with a little envy: "There sits the goddess in her balcony. They say that the Russian prince she is waiting for is coming this week."

Josefina, pale and distinguished, her slender form emerging in the flame of the sunlight from the foliage and flowers, let her glance roam up and down the street, bordered with a prim row of laurel-trees, and with a soft sigh waved a greeting to the group of young men, among whom were some brothers of her girl friends.

Then, some phrase that savored of esoteric philosophy, or a few turns of a two-step that she danced with one of

the fashionable tourists, seemed to these simple-minded young fellows like a studied affront, and the gap that separated them from their beautiful neighbor was widened and deepened. If by chance one of them was smitten by Cupid's dart as Josefina passed him, the poor fellow felt that he must stifle his emotions, keenly realizing the audacity of his dreams, more especially when he recalled the young woman's outburst of mirth at a bashful declaration once blurted out by one of her set.

However, one night, a tourist who had paid assiduous court to Josefina turned up at the hotel much battered and bruised. It was easy to guess the cause from the effects, and the young woman could not control an expression of indignation: "What brutes! It's well that this very thing happens in a town where my father is *alcalde*."

With these occasional flashes of interest, followed by long periods of dull monotony, sometimes distrustful, at other times disdainful, one might say that love, true love, was the human emotion of which Josefina was totally ignorant.

In this way she reached her thirtieth year. And now she began to proclaim loudly that it was very silly to regard marriage as woman's sole vocation. At first but half convinced herself, she reiterated this so often that she finally developed into an enthusiastic advocate of single-blessedness and of the emancipation of woman. She got her father's permission to post his ledgers, and a pair of eyeglasses planted on her nose lent her face quite a severe aspect. None the less, however, her piano still emitted plaintive sounds at the twilight hour, and in pressing a kiss on a child's head her eyes would grow moist.

One day she found an opportunity to satisfy her heart cravings by the exercise of a little practical charity. The object was an unfortunate man who had been picked up, bruised and bleeding, on the highway. He had been run down by an automobile. Some kind bystanders improvised a stretcher, and, for lack of any better place, he was borne to the *alcaldia*.

Josefina, drawn to the balcony by the noise outside, saw the sad company approaching. The man was in great pain. The morning sun lighted up his pallid face and blood-stained hair. As soon as he was able to speak, he told his hearers that, at the time of the accident, he was walking from the railway to the town in seach of work, as he had several letters of recommendations to the *Alcalde*. He appeared to be young and his dress bespoke a decent poverty.

His convalescence was slow, for the surgeon had to put both his arms and one of his legs in casts. Josefina, filled with compassion, aided by her old governess and the negro maid, undertook the long and trying task of nursing The convalescent would thank her with weary eyes, and respectfully express his admiration of the selections she sometimes played for him on her piano.

This guest of Don Cristobal seemed to be a curious type of man. One could see at the first glance that he was a gentleman, but who was he? About thirty-five years of age, nervous and timid, his eyes gleamed with a certain wildness in his sharply outlined face, bordered with a light and neglected growth of beard.

At last he was able to get around. Don Cristobal, after carelessly running over the letters handed to him, wrote a hasty note to a friend in charge of the tobacco factory who needed a bookkeeper. When the patient first came out on the street he made quite a sensation. There was much talk of a small trunk filled with clothing, or with something or other, which had come for him, consigned by name to Nicholas Duran and labeled "Santiago de Cuba." For a week the favorite theme of conversation was whether this could be his real name. However, as he disturbed no one, the matter was soon forgotten.

He now wended his way, still somewhat painfully from the balcony to a room he had hired near the *alcaldia*. In the evening he would come to talk music with Josefina and her friends, getting them to play classical pieces for him. He came to be indispensable for the gay group of damsels. They would call, "Duran, design me some letters for my embroidery," or, "Duran, how can we cash a postal money order?" or, "Duran, beat time for our music." Josefina found consolation in the friendship of this poor fellow, who, like herself, seemed to get along well enough without marriage.

Soon preparation began for the festival of the Virgin. This year the image of the Immaculate One was to be borne in procession at early dawn, attired in a new robe with a blue border, which had grown under the rosy fingers of the girls during the past few months. Nicholas Duran was a valiant auxiliary for the bevy of maidens. One afternoon they filled his poor room with laughter and the *frou-frou* of skirts, and carried him off to the narrow nave of the little church.

"We want your advice," said Josefina. "What do you think would be better for this corner of the throne, a spray of roses or a paper lantern?"

The young man, smiling in answer to the coquettish glances of the bright eyes fixed upon him, sought a reply that would satisfy everyone.

"To tell the truth, the roses and the lantern make a fine combination."

On this he pressed Josefina's hand, gazed at her fervently, and then slipped out of one of the side doors.

Autumn was approaching, and with the advancing season the work of whitewashing and adorning the church became more and more active. Josefina supervised everything with the quick eyes, the rapid gestures, and the energetic expression characteristic of maturity.

One day Duran accompanied her with some friends to a rehearsal of the choir. The fresh young voices rose in unison, filling the nave, and it seemed as though the dewy flowers on the white altar at its extremity quivered under the caress of this work of harmony. Josefina, her eyes lifted to heaven, let her fingers run over the keyboard of the organ, recalling the famous picture of St. Cecilia surrounded by her troop of angels.

The sunset glow was in the sky as they came out of the choir-loft to the placid shadows of the terrace, where they were hidden from the eyes of those without by the open-work of the façade where the church-bells were suspended It was very pleasant there, with the murmur from the swallow's nest, close to the iron cross which grated now and then as it swayed in the breeze. Jose-

fina stood beside Duran, her elbows resting on the parapet. Through the dark entrance to the choir-loft came echoes of laughter. The evening landscape spread out in august serenity beneath their eyes. In the foreground was a mass of foliage; the tops of the lofty laurel-trees of the square were gently stirred, revealing ever and anon the red-tiled roofs. From some far-away courtyards along a tortuous street arose other masses of verdure of a darker hue, over which circled a flight of doves. In the distant plain ascended the smoke of a solitary farm-house. Above the soft curve of the hills arched a milky-white sky untwining its vast, distant clouds in fantastic spirals.

On Josefina's face rested a shade of gravity. After a long pause, she turned her gaze from the peaceful landscape, and said:

"In that house, the last one in the town, I lived when I was a girl of fifteen."

Duran asked himself what this sad young woman might have been as a girl of fifteen. He urged her to tell him something of her life.

"Were you ever engaged?" he demanded suddenly.

"To what purpose?" the young woman answered, smiling. "Are we not agreed that marriage is unnecessary?"

Then their attention was again drawn to the landscape, now bathed in all the glory of the sunset. Duran, furtively drawing from a case a little piece of cardboard, displayed it in the hollow of his hand. Josefina clasped her hands in admiration:

"A water-color sketch. How sweet! Please give it to me."

He, rolling it up mechanically, said in a level voice:

"It was done for you. It was on a very beautiful morning."

The sky was suffused with a ruddy glow down to the west, perfect stillness reigned everywhere. Duran watched the setting sun, just on the point of sinking like a golden ball behind the blue hills. Drinking in with a last glance the whole vision of peace, he murmured:

"Now to think that I must leave all this!"

Josefina experienced a sudden inward shock.

"What are you saying? Why must you leave?"

He made no reply, not even turning his hand.

"Come," she continued coaxingly, "tell me your mystery. You are the last friend I have here. Confess yourself to me."

At this, Duran, growing very pale, looked at her, half opening his lips as though about to relieve his heart of a heavy burden.

"You really wish to know?" he queried. "Really?"

She, noting the emotion stamped on his face, his lips on which the words trembled for utterance, hesitated a moment. A presentiment of what might come made her see in those wide-open eyes the flame of desire which she had so often seen in the eyes of the other men. Unable to control a spasmodic movement that shook her frame, and her face suffused with blushes, she made an affirmative sign to Duran.

Just then, however, a sudden noise sounding in the profound quiet like an explosion, made her cry out, checking

her friend's words. The Angelus! The two large bells gave forth their brazen sound, which was prolonged tremulously in the thin air. Covering her head, Josefina crossed herself devoutly. Duran advanced toward the door, greeting the bell-ringer, who had not observed them.

"You can still go down," the man said. "The main door is open yet."

They descended silently, plunging into the darkness. In the passing a hidden buttress, Duran supported the young woman for a moment, and noted that her hand was cold and trembling. Beneath the shade of the trees the ground was dark; the street lamps blinked with a sickly light.

Just as they emerged from the church there shot through the greenish-blue sky a trail of light. From the lips of both came an Ah! of admiration.

"Did you make a wish?" asked Duran, smiling.

She did not answer at once. Then with a far-away glance, she said:

"Yes, I have made one."

A week later the town was in the throes of the festival. The *alcaldia*, because of its favorable situation, was filled with a motley crowd of local notables, who animatedly discussed the details of the procession. Alfonso, Don Cristobal's son, had brought his whole young flock with him, and Josefina strove to find good places for the little ones. As she would pass before the groups of men she would smile without pausing to speak.

The doctor, sprawled out on a rocking-chair, questioned Alfonso as to the latest sales of sugar-cane.

"The market is steady," he replied. "If I were you, though, I would not sell before January."

Leaning backwards, his stout form quite filled his chair. He spoke with his eyes half closed, and the harsh outline of his face was softened by the good-natured expression of his mouth.

"Please take that child out on the balcony," he said to Josefina as she was passing.

The child was a three-year-old boy, ruddy and chubby, with laughing blue eyes. The young woman took him by the hand and went out on the balcony where Duran was standing. They began to chat. Suddenly quite near to them a boy set off a rocket which flared up in the sky. Josefina, startled, clung to Duran's arm. He trembled at her touch and could only murmur:

"Josefina, how charming you are."

Then, as she remained silent, seeming altogether occupied in arranging the child's scarf, he added in smothered accents the words he had uttered a few days before:

"I have but little time left me to enjoy the life here."

"Are you, then, determined to leave us?" questioned the young woman, with affected unconcern.

"What can I do?" he replied.

Her face expressed surprise mixed with fear and tenderness. She again felt the approach of the declaration that had been interrupted near the cross in the peace of the evening, the expected declaration in which he would tell her his dream of love, his sorrow that he could not aspire to her hand, he, a poor adventurer, with no property, his desperate resolution to flee.

"I ought, perhaps, never to have said a word," Duran continued, "but the

confidence that reigns between us seems to warrant me in doing so now. My soul burns to reveal my secret."

At this moment the child freed itself from Josefina's arm and ran into the house. Then, speaking quickly and as though the words were forced from him, Duran said:

"I cannot remain here, because they are hunting for me. I was unfortunate in Havana. Business affairs, you understand? There are terrible complications."

The young woman gazed on him with astonishment, with a vague expression of disenchantment. He pursued:

"I had to fly, I had to begin life over again to work my way up from the bottom—to change my name. And all on account of my wife's extravagance, her love of luxury. My wife!"

"Ah!" was all Josefina could utter.

"Yes, I am married. Would to God that I were not. But for heaven's sake don't breathe a word of this. I might be recognized!"

Josefina put her handkerchief to her mouth as though to stifle a cough. There was a pause during which Duran took something out of his pocket.

"Just look at this," he said; "this is her picture."

The young woman saw before her a proudly impertinent face, a fully developed figure elegantly attired, a studied pose. The portrait vaguely recalled to her one of the summer visitors who had effaced her in the times gone by.

"She's very pretty. Did she make you very happy?"

Duran, with a half-ashamed air, replied:

"Oh yes, in a way. One does not meet Josefinas everywhere."

No, indeed, one does not meet them everywhere. Josefina, feeling a heavy weight on her heart, sighed to think how badly things were arranged in this world.

A burst of red light seemed to cast an almost infernal reflection over the street. The procession was approaching. A group of torches came in view from around the corner.

"Come, Pepito!" called out Josefina, The child ran out quickly.

"The Virgin—there is the Virgin!"

She pointed out the image, its blue and white draperies brightly illumined by the light of the torches as it swayed to and fro on its platform.

Then, with a supreme effort for self-control, Josefina lifted up the child, and pressed it to her bosom with an embrace in which was sealed a definite renunciation.

Chaste Devasmita

There is a city in the world famous under the name of Támraliptá, and in that city there was a very rich merchant named Dhanadatta. And he, being childless, assembled many Bráhmans and said to them with due respect, "Take such steps as will procure me a son soon." Then those Bráhmans said to him: "This is not at all difficult, for Bráhmans can accomplish all things in this world by means of ceremonies in accordance with the

Scriptures. To give you an instance, there was in old times a king who had no sons, and he had a hundred and five wives in his harem. And by means of a sacrifice to procure a son, there was born to him a son named Jantu, who was like the rising of the new moon to the eyes of his wives.

"Once on a time an ant bit the boy on the thigh as he was crawling about on his knees, so that he was very unhappy and sobbed loudly. Thereupon the whole harem was full of confused lamentation, and the king himself shrieked out 'My son! my son!' like a common man. The boy was soon comforted, the ant having been removed, and the king blamed the misfortune of his only having one son as the cause of all his grief. And he asked the Bráhmans in his affliction if there was any expedient by which he might obtain a large number of children. They answered him, 'O king, there is one expedient open to you; you must slay this son and offer up all his flesh in the fire. By smelling the smell of that sacrifice all thy wives will obtain sons.' When he heard that, the king had the whole ceremony performed as they directed; and he obtained as many sons as he had wives. So we can obtain a son for you also by a burnt-offering." When they had said this to Dhanadatta, the Bráhmans, after a sacrificial fee had been promised them, performed a sacrifice: then a son was born to that merchant. That son was called Guhasena, and he gradually grew up to man's estate. Then his father Dhanadatta began to look out for a wife for him.

Then his father went with that son of his to another country, on the pretense of traffic, but really to get a daughter-in-law. There he asked an excellent merchant of the name of Dharmagupta to give him his daughter named Devasmitá for his son Guhasena. But Dharmagupta, who was tenderly attached to his daughter, did not approve of that connection, reflecting that the city of Támraliptá was very far off. But when Devasmitá beheld that Guhasena, her mind was immediately attracted by his virtues, and she was set on abandoning her relations, and so she made an assignation with him by means of a confidante, and went away from that country at night with her beloved and his father. When they reached Támraliptá they were married, and the minds of the young couple were firmly knit together by the bond of mutual love. Then Guhasena's father died, and he himself was urged by his relations to go to the country of Katáha for the purpose of trafficking; but his wife Devasmitá was too jealous to approve of that expedition, fearing exceedingly that he would be attracted by some other lady. Then, as his wife did not approve of it, and his relations kept inciting him to it, Guhasena, whose mind was firmly set on doing his duty, was bewildered. Then he went and performed a vow in the temple of the god, observing a rigid fast, trusting that the god would show him some way out of his difficulty. And his wife Devasmitá also performed a vow with him; then Siva was pleased to appear to that couple in a dream; and giving them two red lotuses the god said to them, "Take each of you one of these lotuses in your hand. And if either of you shall be unfaithful during your separation, the lotus in the hand of the other shall fade, but not otherwise."

After hearing this, the two woke up, and each beheld in the hand of the other a red lotus, and it seemed as if they had got one another's hearts.

Then Guhasena set out, lotus in hand, but Devasmitá remained in the house with her eyes fixed upon her flower. Guhasena for his part quickly reached the country of Katáha, and began to buy and sell jewels there. And four young merchants in that country, seeing that that unfading lotus was ever in his hand, were greatly astonished. Accordingly they got him to their house by an artifice, and made him drink a great deal of wine, and then asked him the history of the lotus, and he being intoxicated told them the whole story. Then those four young merchants, knowing that Guhasena would take a long time to complete his sales and purchases of jewels and other wares, planned together, like rascals as they were, the seduction of his wife out of curiosity, and eager to accomplish it set out quickly for Támraliptá without their departure being noticed. There they cast about for some instrument, and at last had recourse to a female ascetic of the name of Yogakarandiká, who lived in a sanctuary of Buddha; and they said to her in an affectionate manner, "Reverend madam, if our object is accomplished by your help, we will give you much wealth." She answered them: "No doubt, you young men desire some woman in this city, so tell me all about it, I will procure you the object of your desire, but I have no wish for money. When they heard that they said, "Procure us an interview with the wife of the merchant Guhasena named Devasmitá." When she heard that, the ascetic undertook to manage that business for them, and she gave those young merchants her own house to reside in. Then she gratified the servants at Guhasena's house with gifts of sweetmeats and other things, and afterwards entered it with her pupil. Then, as she approached the private rooms of Devasmitá, a hound, that was fastened there with a chain, would not let her come near, but opposed her entrance in the most determined way. Then Devasmitá seeing her, of her own accord sent a maid, and had her brought in, thinking to herself, "What can this person be come for?" After she had entered, the wicked ascetic gave Devasmitá her blessing, and, treating the virtuous woman with affected respect, said to her, "I have always had a desire to see you, but to-day I saw you in a dream, therefore I have come to visit you with impatient eagerness; and my mind is afflicted at beholding you separated from your husband, for beauty and youth are wasted when one is deprived of the society of one's beloved." With this and many other speeches of the same kind she tried to gain the confidence of the virtuous woman is a short interview, and then taking leave of her she returned to her own house. On the second day she took with her a piece of meat full of pepper dust, and went again to the house of Devasmitá, and there she gave that piece of meat to the hound at the door, and the hound gobbled it up, pepper and all. Then owing to the pepper dust, the tears flowed in profusion from the animal's eyes, and her nose began to run. And the cunning ascetic immediately went into the apartment of Devasmitá, who received her hospitably, and began to cry. When

Devasmitá asked her why she shed tears, she said with affected reluctance: "My friend, look at this hound weeping outside here. This creature recognized me to-day as having been its companion in a former birth, and begin to weep; for that reason my tears gushed through pity." When she heard that, and saw that hound outside apparently weeping, Devasmitá thought for a moment to herself, "What can be the meaning of this wonderful sight?" Then the ascetic said to her, "My daughter, in a former birth, I and that hound were the two wives of a certain Bráhman. And our husband frequently went about to other countries on embassies by order of the king. Now while he was away from home, I lived at my good will and pleasure, and so did not cheat the elements, of which I was composed, and my senses, of their lawful enjoyment. For considerate treatment of the elements and senses is held to be the highest duty. Therefore I have been born in this birth with a recollection of my former existence. But she, in her former life, through ignorance, confined all her attention to the preservation of her character, therefore she has been degraded and born again as one of the canine race, however, she too remembers her former birth." The wise Devasmitá said to herself, "This is a novel conception of duty; no doubt this woman has laid a treacherous snare for me"; and so she said to her, "Reverend lady, for this long time I have been ignorant of this duty, so procure me an interview with some charming man." Then the ascetic said, "There are residing here some young merchants that have come from another country, so I will bring them to you." When she had said this, the ascetic returned home delighted, and Devasmitá of her own accord said to her maids: "No doubt those scoundrelly young merchants, whoever they may be, have seen that unfading lotus in the hand of my husband, and have on some occasion or other, when he was drinking wine, asked him out of curiosity to tell the whole story of it, and have now come here from that island to deceive me, and this wicked ascetic is employed by them. So bring quickly some wine mixed with Datura, and when you have brought it, have a dog's foot of iron made as quickly as possible." When Devasmitá had given these orders, the maids executed them faithfully, and one of the maids, by her orders, dressed herself up to resemble her mistress. The ascetic for her part chose out of the party of four merchants (each of whom in his eagerness said—"Let me go first"—) one individual, and brought him with her. And concealing him in the dress of her pupil, she introduced him in the evening into the house of Devasmitá, and coming out, disappeared. Then that maid, who was disguised as Devasmitá, courteously persuaded the young merchant to drink some of that wine drugged with Datura. That liquor, like his own immodesty, robbed him of his senses, and then the maids took away his clothes and other equipments and left him stark naked; then they branded him on the forehead with the mark of a dog's foot, and during the night took him and pushed him into a ditch full of filth. Then he recovered consciousness in the last watch of the night, and found himself plunged in a ditch, as it were the hell *Avichi* assigned to him by his sins.

Then he got up and washed himself and went to the house of the female ascetic, in a state of misery, feeling with his fingers the mark on his forehead. And when he got there, he told his friends that he had been robbed on the way, in order that he might not be the only person made ridiculous. And the next morning he sat with a cloth wrapped round his branded forehead, giving as an excuse that he had a headache from keeping awake so long, and drinking too much. In the same way the next young merchant was maltreated, when he got to the house of Devasmitá, and when he returned home stripped, he said, "I put on my ornaments there, and as I was coming out I was plundered by robbers." In the morning he also, on the plea of a headache, put a wrapper on to cover his branded forehead.

In the same way all the four young merchants suffered in turns branding and other humiliating treatment, though they concealed the fact. And they went away from the place, without revealing to the female Buddhist ascetic the ill-treatment they had experienced, hoping that she would suffer in a similar way. On the next day the ascetic went with her disciple to the house of Devasmitá, much delighted at having accomplished what she undertook to do. Then Devasmitá received her courteously, and made her drink wine drugged with Datura, offered as a sign of gratitude. When she and her disciple were intoxicated with it, that chaste wife cut off their ears and noses, and flung them also into a filthy pool. And being distressed by the thought that perhaps these young merchants might go and slay her husband, she told the whole circumstance to her mother-in-law. Then her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, you have acted nobly, but possibly some misfortune may happen to my son in consequence of what you have done."

So the wise Devasmitá forthwith put on the dress of a merchant. Then she embarked on a ship, on the pretense of a mercantile expedition, and came to the country of Katáha where her husband was. And when she arrived there, she saw that husband of hers, Guhasena, in the midst of a circle of merchants, like consolation in external bodily form. He seeing her afar off in the dress of a man, as it were drank her in with his eyes, and thought to himself, "Who may this merchant be that looks so like my beloved wife?" So Devasmitá went and represented to the king that she had a petition to make, and asked him to assemble all his subjects. Then the king full of curiosity assembled all the citizens, and said to that lady disguised as a merchant, "What is your petition?" Then Devasmitá said, "There are residing here in your midst four slaves of mine who have escaped, let the king make them over to me." Then the king said to her, "All the citizens are present here, so look at everyone in order to recognize him, and take those slaves of yours." Then she seized upon the four young merchants, whom she had before treated in such a humiliating way in her house, and who had wrappers bound round their heads. Then the merchants, who were there, flew in a passion, and said to her, "These are the sons of distinguished merchants, how then can they be your slaves?" Then she answered them.

"If you do not believe what I say, examine their foreheads which I marked with a dog's foot." They consented, and removing the headwrappers of these four, they all beheld the dog's foot on their foreheads. Then all the merchants were abashed, and the king, being astonished, himself asked Devasmitá what all this meant. She told the whole story, and all the people burst out laughing, and the king said to the lady, "They are your slaves by the best of titles." Then the other merchants paid a large sum of money to that chaste wife, to redeem those four from slavery, and a fine to the king's treasury. Devasmitá received that money, and recovered her husband, and being honored by all good men, returned then to her own city Támraliptá, and she was never afterwards separated from her beloved.

Captain Poison

"GREAT heavens! What a woman!" cried the captain, and stamped with fury. "Not without reason have I been trembling and in fear of her from the first time I saw her! It must have been a warning of fate that I stopped playing *écarté* with her. It was also a bad omen that I passed so many sleepless nights. Was there ever mortal in a worse perplexity than I am? How can I leave her alone without a protector, loving her, as I do, more than my own life? And, on the other hand, how can I marry her, after all my declaimings against marriage?"

Then turning to Augustias—"What would they say of me in the club? What would people say of me, if they met me in the street with a woman on my arm, or if they found me at home, just about to feed a child in swaddling clothes? I—to have children? To worry about them? To live in eternal fear that they might fall sick or die? Augustias, believe me, as true as there is a God above us, I am absolutely unfit for it! I should behave in such a way that after a short while you would call upon heaven either to be divorced or to become a widow. Listen to my advice: do not marry me, even if I ask you."

"What a strange creature you are," said the young woman, without allowing herself to be at all discomposed, and sitting very erect in her chair. "All that you are only telling to yourself! From what do you conclude that I wish to be married to you; that I would accept your offer, and that I should not prefer living by myself, even if I had to work day and night, as so many girls do who are orphans?"

"How do I come to that conclusion?" answered the captain with the greatest candor. "Because it cannot be otherwise. Because we love each other. Because we are drawn to each other. Because a man such as I, and a woman such as you, cannot live in any other way! Do you suppose I do not understand that? Don't you suppose I have reflected on it before now? Do you think I am indifferent to your good name and reputation? I have spoken plainly in order to speak, in order to

fly from my own conviction, in order to examine whether I can escape from this terrible dilemma which is robbing me of my sleep, and whether I can possibly find an expedient so that I need not marry you—to do which I shall finally be compelled, if you stand by your resolve to make your way alone!"

"Alone! Alone!" repeated Augustias, roguishly. "And why not with a worthier companion? Who tells you that I shall not some day meet a man whom I like, and who is not afraid to marry me?"

"Augustias! let us skip that!" growled the captain, his face turning scarlet.

"And why should we not talk about it?"

"Let us pass over that, and let me say, at the same time, that I will murder the man who dares to ask for your hand. But it is madness on my part to be angry without any reason. I am not so dull as not to see how we two stand. Shall I tell you? We love each other. Do not tell me I am mistaken! That would be lying. And here is the proof: if you did not love me, I, too, should not love you! Let us try to meet one another halfway. I ask for a delay of ten years. When I shall have completed my half century, and when, a feeble old man, I shall have become familiar with the idea of slavery, then we will marry without anyone knowing about it. We will leave Madrid, and go to the country, where we shall have no spectators, where there will be nobody to make fun of me. But until this happens, please take half of my income secretly, and without any human soul ever knowing anything about it. You continue to live here, and I remain in my house. We will see each other, but only in the presence of witnesses—for instance, in society. We will write to each other every day. So as not to endanger your good name, I will never pass through this street, and on Memorial Day only we will go to the cemetery together with Rosa."

Augustias could not but smile at the last proposal of the good captain, and her smile was not mocking, but contented and happy, as if some cherished hope had dawned in her heart, as if it were the first day of the sun of happiness which was about to rise in her heaven! But being a woman—though as brave and free from artifices as few of them—she yet managed to subdue the signs of joy rising within her. She acted as if she cherished not the slightest hope, and said with a distant coolness which is usually the special and genuine sign of chaste reserve:

"You make yourself ridiculous with your peculiar conditions. You stipulate for the gift of an engagement-ring, for which nobody has yet asked you."

"I know still another way out—for a compromise, but that is really the last one. Do you fully understand, my young lady from Aragon? It is the last way out, which a man, also from Aragon, begs leave to explain to you."

She turned her head and looked straight into his eyes, with an expression indescribably earnest, captivating, quiet, and full of expectation.

The captain had never seen her features so beautiful and expressive; at that moment she looked to him like a queen.

"Augustias," said, or rather stammered, this brave soldier, who had been under fire a hundred times, and who had made such a deep impression on the young girl through his charging

under a rain of bullets like a lion. "I have the honor to ask for your hand on one certain, essential, unchangeable condition. Tomorrow morning—today—as soon as the papers are in order—as quickly as possible. I can live without you no longer!"

The glances of the young girl became milder, and she rewarded him for his decided heroism with a tender and bewitching smile.

"But I repeat that it is on one condition," the bold warrior hastened to repeat, feeling that Augustias's glances made him confused and weak.

"On what condition?" asked the young girl, turning fully round, and now holding him under the witchery of her sparkling black eyes.

"On the condition," he stammered, "that, in case we have children, we send them to the orphanage. I mean—on this point I will never yield. Well, do you consent? For heaven's sake, say yes!"

"Why should I not consent to it, Captain Veneno?" answered Augustias, with a peal of laughter. "You shall take them there yourself, or, better still, we both of us will take them there. And we will give them up without kissing them, or anything else! Don't you think we shall take them there?"

Thus spoke Augustias, and looked at the captain with exquisite joy in her eyes. The good captain thought he would die of happiness; a flood of tears burst from his eyes; he folded the blushing girl in his arms, and said:

"So I am lost?"

"Irretrievably lost, Captain Veneno," answered Augustias.

One morning in May, 1852—that is, four years after the scene just described—a friend of mine, who told me this story, stopped his horse in front of a mansion on San Francisco Avenue, in Madrid; he threw the reins to his groom, and asked the long-coated footman who met him at the door:

"Is your master at home?"

"If your honor will be good enough to walk upstairs, you will find him in the library. His excellency does not like to have visitors announced. Everybody can go up to him directly."

"Fortunately I know the house thoroughly," said the stranger to himself, while he mounted the stairs. "In the library! Well, well, who would have thought of Captain Veneno ever taking to the sciences?"

Wandering through the rooms, the visitor met another servant, who repeated, "The master is in the library." And at last he came to the door of the room in question, opened it quickly, and stood, almost turned to stone for astonishment, before the remarkable group which it offered to his view.

In the middle of the room, on the carpet which covered the floor, a man was crawling on all fours. On his back rode a little fellow about three years old, who was kicking the man's sides with his heels. Another small boy, who might have been a year and a half old, stood in front of the man's head, and had evidently been tumbling his hair. One hand held the father's neckerchief, and the little fellow was tugging at it as if it had been a halter, shouting with delight in his merry child's voice:

"Gee up, donkey! Gee up!"

Empress Claudia's Secret

Upon the summit of Rua, one of the loftiest of the Euganean hills, situated amidst the solemn scenes of Nature, and secluded beneath a canopy of embowering trees, stood the solitary abode of the Penitent Eremites. Its commanding site, overlooking verdant hills and pleasant villas, with noble cities rising in the distance, fully compensated by its variety for the desert loneliness of the spot, the quiet approach to which lay through avenues of lofty pine, inspiring a deep and sacred calm, mingled with an awe well adapted to the scene.

No women are permitted to approach the place except on an appointed day in the early part of autumn, when they are shown no farther than the temple, not into the more secluded sanctuaries of the hermits' abode. A solemn festival then ushers in the period; the most beautiful women, splendidly attired and mounted upon spirited palfreys, vie with each other in dress and loveliness, and, escorted by the flower of the nobility, add grace and liveliness to the scene. Never was it more magnificently celebrated than on a certain occasion, when the lady of one of the rectors of Padua, who had recently lost her eldest son, returning from France in the flower of his age and hopes, attended the ceremony with a noble train of ladies and cavaliers, with whom she ascended the summit of the mount. The splendour of the feast, abounding with all the rarities more suitable to the genius that supplied them than to the nature of the establishment, was calculated to surprise, and even to dazzle the eye.

The warmth of the day becoming more and more insupportable, the lady of the feast, accompanied by her train, retired into the shady recess formed by some beautiful beeches surrounding a little eminence, which commanded a lovely and extensive prospect. There the sweet and solitary scene, so favourable to the indulgence of tender and melancholy thoughts, led her to praise a mode of life so wholly divested of all worldly cares, and preferable in her estimation to the aspiring dignity and love of glory so much affected by vulgar minds, and she proceeded to contrast the vanity of such earthly considerations with the milder pleasures and innocent repose of life, such as was there enjoyed. She had hardly concluded, before one of the cavaliers present happened to mention that such a choice had really been made and adhered to by a noble youth of great worldly expectations. To him the solitude and deprivation of a hermitage offered more true delight than the noblest alliances and most festive courts in the world. Expressing her high admiration of so disinterested and magnanimous a resolution, and curious to hear the variety and changes of fortune that had led to it, the lady entreated the superior of the convent to introduce her to him. In a short time he made his appearance; the nobility of his aspect was clearly apparent through his homely habit, while the traces of youthful fire and beauty still threw a charm over his fine but pallid features.

The modesty and humility of his demeanour were in unison with the character he had adopted, though not desti-

tute of the courtesy due to a noble lady and her festive train on an occasion like the present. The lady, possessing singularly noble and pleasing qualities, paying him the respect due to his rank, and commending his resolution, as arising out of the most excellent motives, besought him to favour them with an account of his adventures. The young hermit attributed the merit wholly to the Divine power, and expressed great repugnance to repeat the history of his transgressions; on which his superior sought to remove his scruples by observing that, whatever had been the errors of his past life, he had fully repaired them by his exemplary sorrow and repentance; and as it would, perhaps, be a great punishment to him, it would tend to his edification to relate his past life, and add to the efficacy of his sufferings. The young man bowed his head to the superior in token of compliance, and with a composed countenance and a sort of modest assurance thus began:—"It is a due punishment upon my past levities; the pain of revealing them before this honourable and excellent company I meet with patience and resignation. Obedience, however, is my duty, and all diffidence must give way, so that I have to entreat of your honourable company, most illustrious lady, to excuse me for my apparent boldness in intruding my private affairs upon your attention.

"My name was Sigismondo, Conte d'Arco, the only branch belonging to that house for a long series of years that possessed many extensive seigniories on the confines of Italy and Germany. My father died while I was yet a child; and my mother, on her marrying a second time, caused me to be educated at the court of the Archduchess Dowager of Inspruck, my native sovereign, as one of the pages of honour. My tender age and misfortunes awakened so much compassion in the princess, that she seemed to regard me rather as a mother than a mistress, treating me in every particular like her child. She made me a playfellow of the Princess Claudia, an only daughter, about the same age as myself, not exceeding seven; we lived on the most familiar terms, and formed an attachment that became more rooted with our increasing years. It would be idle to attempt to disguise from your penetration, madam, that such youthful tenderness and familiarity was likely soon to ripen into confidence—into love. This passion seemed daily to acquire fresh force, inasmuch as it did not appear disagreeable to the Princess, who was quite sensible of its existence. To say the truth, as it will fully appear in the sequel, if you will not think me guilty of too great temerity in raising my eyes to my young queen, I began to imagine, and not without reason, that she deigned to bend hers also upon me. We had each just completed our fifteenth year; my sweet companion was gifted with all the brightest qualities and accomplishments, both of mind and person, the fame of her virtues and her beauty not only spreading throughout Germany, but the rest of Europe. Indeed, her portraits have since become familiar in every land, and few are there of those present who would require a more particular description of her charms at my hands. But I have to delineate a few qualities that no pencil can reach, those features of the living mind, bright and beautiful, which at the same moment were enabled to

seize their subject, to distinguish and to deliberate in a manner surprising to the most skilful and accomplished intellects.

"Her demeanour was a mixture of sweet grace and gravity, and this soft majesty she always displayed with so little effort as to make it appear perfectly natural. Her pleasures were all innocent and delicate, music forming the chief, in which she was most passionately attached to harmonies of a plaintive and pathetic cast. I have often surprised her singing such songs in some sweet retired scene, and shedding tears over feigned woes, borne away by her natural tenderness, and by an irresistible attachment to subjects of this description.

"In truth, it might be said that her own prophetic genius inspired her with some of those tender lines connected with her own future fortunes, which she sang like the dying bird that is said to usher in her own doom. Deeper passion, along with a sense of duty, now more and more usurped my breast; my struggles became great; I blamed my own presumption; I tried to recover my self-command, but all in vain. My eyes had too long dwelt upon and become riveted to her charms, and one look of hers overpowered my firmest resolutions, insomuch that I found I must either give way to my feelings and madly throw myself at her feet, or seek to avoid her presence. I no longer frequented her company at those seasons when I was able to dispense with my duties at court; while, the better to give an air of probability to my absence, I devoted myself with double assiduity to my studies and to the amusements common to my age. Fencing, riding, and every kind of military exercise seemed to absorb my whole time, but my thoughts were, in reality, far away My evenings were spent in music, dancing, and other favourite diversions at the court, while my more serious hours were engaged in the abstruser sciences.

"In this manner weeks passed away without a single interview with my beloved princess; our mutual pursuits of dancing, singing, riding, and reading together were wholly abandoned. Meeting me one day by chance returning from the riding-school, heated and breathless with exercise, she began to rally me upon my sudden and surprising application to more martial pursuits, while, in the same tone, I respectfully assured her that it arose wholly out of a desire to render myself more worthy of her Highness's service; and bowing to her with the same ceremony practised by the other courtiers, I left her without waiting for any reply.

"Whilst I was persevering with the utmost pain in this assumed character, it was resolved by the court to adjourn in order to partake of the pleasures of the country. The place was delightfully situated at a short distance from the city, and the usual duties and occupations of the court giving way to mere amusement, all motive for my prescribed absence and alienation from the young princess ceased. Besides, however much I studied to avoid her, it was not always possible. She surprised me one morning early in a shady walk leading from the garden to the wood. We met—our eyes met—and with a profound obeisance I sought to pass on. Commanding me, however, to follow her, she pursued the path leading to the wood with a composed air and a serene aspect. At length addressing me, she

observed, 'Your wisdom and discretion, Count, are above all praise, and merit as much kindness and generosity on my side. It is in vain that you strive to conceal the occasion of your late estrangement, and it would be equally vain for me to affect ignorance of it. Nevertheless I do not wish to give you pain; you shall find your advantage in it; and that you may feel assured of this, even listen and receive the tribute due to your merit.' Blushing deeply as she uttered these words, she saw likewise that I observed it, and continued as follows: 'My confusion, Sigismond, proceeds from my inexperience in such affairs, not from any sense of saying or doing aught unworthy my birth and quality. I know not whether it be permitted a princess to countenance a vassal's love, but I do know that if ever there was one to be pitied in the world, I am that one. Our friendship seemed to have been born with us; I felt as a child a sort of instinctive attachment to you; our young and playful affection grew with us, and it has continued, as is but too apparent, to be cherished on both sides until it has become a part of ourselves. I am familiar with all your feelings, and understand them better than you understand mine; and in common gratitude it becomes my duty to confess that I feel the same partiality towards you that I am convinced you bear to me. Why then dissimulate with you, or leave you to extort it from me by degrees, when such an admission is mere justice to your virtues, that you may in future feel that noble confidence in them which is calculated to make you happy? Your features are sufficient evidence of your joy. I see it, alas! while I confess with burning blushes how much I love you; though, as we are equal in our passion, I have no cause for shame in the avowal. Were the sceptre I am fated to inherit in my own power, in your hands only should it be deposited; but I am certain that you place a higher value upon my heart than upon my possessions. Fortune may dispose of the latter; of my heart, never—it is yours! Dispose of it as you will. I am sure you will never abuse your power over it; at all events, it is yours!' Ere the lovely princess had half concluded these words, I was at her feet, lost in a delirium of confusion and joy. Not a word could I utter; I kissed the hem of her robes; I felt her tears upon my hands as she gently sought to raise me from the ground. I seized her offered hand, and covered it with my kisses: 'Dearest lady, most honoured and cherished mistress!' I cried, 'is it possible I can believe my senses? Were this the first proof of your regard, well might I imagine you meant to scoff me for the rash feelings I have indulged; but I have experienced ever since a child that your compassion, your generosity, have no bounds. May Heaven's richest blessings attend you! you have snatched me from an abyss of terror and despair at the bare idea of the passion I indulged, and I am now at the summit of all human felicity. Yet would I willingly have aspired higher than the honour of serving you, even at the risk of all I held dear, of life itself; and therefore it was that I attempted to shun you. A sceptre, a thousand sceptres, in competition with your love would have no charms for me. Let kings seize your realms; I am satisfied in possessing the nobility and royalty of such a soul as yours. Ah! would that,

as our love, our birth were equal; for I esteem not the wealth or dignity of worlds equal to the least testimony of your favour. I should be the meanest and vilest of wretches to regard aught beyond the beauties of soul and form that have subdued me so long.'

"I was proceeding, in the tumult of my feelings, to express my gratitude and delight, when a group of ladies and cavaliers appeared in sight, and I followed the princess as she turned to meet the party with a free and even lively and playful air. During the few days that the court sojourned in the country, wholly devoted to the feast, the chase, and similar rural diversions, it became my delightful task to resume my former station, being almost in constant attendance upon the princess. No longer on the list of pages, I had entered upon the more honourable rank of cavalier, while my early intimacy and education with the princess, and the respect which she uniformly testified for me in public, acquired for me no little distinction at court. And as the chief object of her Serene Highness the Archduchess, who held paramount sway, was to amuse the mind of the princess, naturally inclined to melancholy, she ordained a solemn festival to grace the close of their residence, after the pleasures of a magnificent chase. The young princesses, along with the ladies of the court, appeared arrayed in the character of Amazons, with high waving plumes on their heads and upon richly-caparisoned palfreys. The Princess Claudia Felice was seen mounted upon a swift courser of a jet black, and adorned with a tuft of feathers, while its fair rider shone bright to the eye in a loosely-folded dress, elegantly suited to the occasion. When she entered into the wood, she drew nearer to me as I rode along at her side, and took occasion, without observation, to inform me of her great desire to obtain some signal triumph over the ferocious prey. I then approached still closer to her, separating from the rest of the party, and penetrating still deeper into the recesses of the wood, which the wild beasts were supposed to haunt in greater numbers. There, without deigning to pursue either stags or hares, or any animals of a less ferocious cast, the hunters prepared to attack a huge wild boar, which came rushing towards us pursued by some of the dogs. Desirous of yielding to the Princess the honour of despatching him, I stepped aside to leave him open to her attack, when she had the good fortune to wound him mortally with her hunting-spear in the head. In a transport of rage, the beast still sprung forward in the same direction, urged on all sides by the dogs, and notwithstanding two pistol-shots, rushing upon her horse that stood in its way, the Princess, by the disorder into which she was thrown, ran the greatest risk of her life. Some of the hunters now eagerly hastened to her assistance, but they were on foot, and before they could arrive I had sprung from my horse between the Princess and the enraged animal, and assaulted it furiously with my sword. Having passed the weapon through its body, I laid it dead at her feet, while, with the utmost presence of mind, not half so much terrified at her own danger as I had been, she said, 'I find it is a great advantage to place myself under your protection; you seem to know how to defend what belongs to you.' 'And what coward would not, when he had to combat in so sweet

and glorious a cause?' But the hunters coming up, prevented farther conversation; they raised the enormous animal with difficulty, in order to bear it in triumph before the Princess to meet the rest of the party. Already informed of the accident, the Archduchess was hastening, full of alarm, in the same direction. Shocked at beholding its immense size, on its first appearance, her terror was the next moment changed into an exclamation of triumph when she beheld the beloved Princess unhurt accompanied by me. She received us with the warmest gratulations, bestowing upon me praises and rewards too flattering to recount. The chase then continued with double vigour and animation; the quarry was more than equal to our hopes; and, with the evening festivities, concluded our rural sojourn.

"On the removal of the court to the city, I again returned to my usual avocations, though without resigning the delightful privilege I enjoyed of continual access to the company of my Princess, and the oftener as I found she dwelt upon my weakness with an eye of tenderness and pity, not of reproach. She still continued to give me open and honourable proofs of her regard, and even to intrust me with her most secret and important views; more especially in respect to a proposed union with the Duke of York, the King of England's brother, since united to the Princess of Modena. Nor did she merely make me her counsellor upon the occasion; she candidly expressed her aversion to the match, and her satisfaction at its rejection.

"About this period died the Empress Margerita Teresa of Austria, consort of the Emperor Leopold, without issue, consequently that great monarch soon directed his views toward another union, and the eyes of the whole world were eagerly fixed upon his future choice. At this time the affair of the Duke of York had already proceeded so far that the Princess would have been compelled to yield a reluctant consent, had not a still more unfortunate proposal intervened. During its whole progress my attention was on the alert, no less from the impassioned interest I felt on my own account than on that of my Princess, whose grief was but toc apparent at the idea of being transported into foreign parts, more especially into a country like Britain, where the unruly genius of the people threatened equally the sceptres and the lives of its princes. It was my firm resolution to follow in her train wherever she went, preferring continual servitude in such a cause to all the ease, honours, and emoluments in the world. I valued not the risks and inconveniences I should have to encounter from a nation so inimical to our religion and to good government as the English.

"While in this trying and perilous conjuncture I was awaiting day by day tidings of the conclusion of the nuptials, now near at hand, to judge from the frequent departure of messengers on both sides, what was my secret triumph when the young Princess, one day bursting in upon her attendants, after an audience with the Archduchess, selected me from the number, and bade me follow her into the adioining gallery. There, leaning upon a balcony overhanging the gardens, she thus addressed me, after a few moments' pause: 'I know not, Count, how you will receive the information I have to communicate,

and I am almost doubtful whether I ought to unfold it to you. But as you must still continue to enjoy the privilege of hearing from my own lips whatever concerns my nearest interests, have the goodness to peruse this document, containing the ratification of my marriage with the Emperor Leopold.'

"Having cast my eye over the fatal letters, and even kissed them in token of submission, I threw myself at the Princess's feet, and bowing my head more in sorrow than in submission, I broke out into the following words: 'I cannot express, most illustrious Princess, soon my empress and my queen, the feelings that agitate my bosom. Must I say how much rejoiced I feel at the prospect of your glorious rank, so advantageous to all Germany, and to the interests and aggrandisement of the empire? Truly honoured do I feel, nor can any words express my gratitude for your condescension in permitting me to hear these tidings from your own lips. It is a distinction'—— 'Oh no, no distinction,' interrupted the Princess; 'for, as Heaven is my witness, noble Sigismond, there is nothing in all these magnificent prospects that affords me half so much pleasure as the idea of being enabled to confer upon you far greater distinction than before. Imagine not that this accession of state will ever change my feelings; the Empress of the Romans will find nothing to blame in the Princess of Inspruck; and therefore it is that I here renew the gift which she formerly gave you. Nor in this do I in the least trench upon the fealty I owe the Emperor as my liege lord and master, inasmuch as the sentiment I am bound to preserve towards him is wholly opposite in its nature to the one I mean ever to retain for you throughout a life of innocence, namely, the tenderest friendship. Yes, I am not afraid to repeat it, Count d'Arco, my love for you appears to have been made in heaven: it is the force of destiny, and the confession of it is due to your superior merit. I have not hitherto asked the least reward for the partiality I entertain towards you: it is now I have to beg a boon of you. It is, that you will consent to share my good fortune with me, nay, to change your country, and absent yourself from me as little as possible. Do this cheerfully, and count upon my gratitude, in proportion as I meet with obedience to these commands. But I must not confer with you longer now; I well know all you would wish to tell me, and if you can understand my feelings as well without giving them a tongue, even what I have already said were needless.' Tears started into her eyes at these last words, but she soon repressed them, and without leaving me time to reply, she hastened out of the gallery to rejoin her party.

"Tidings of these illustrious nuptials getting abroad, the city became one scene of festivity, the respective nations resuming all the hilarity and hopes that had recently been clouded by the death of some of their princes, which threatened a loss of successors in several of the most powerful houses of Germany. A sort of general carnival was proclaimed, and the court, as if to set the most joyous example, ordained, in its liberality, to hold a tourney. It was, perhaps, one of the most sumptuous and magnificent spectacles ever witnessed, the various rencounters taking place only between nobles and cavaliers of the most approved courage and illustri-

ous birth. It being usual in Germany to carry the device and the colour of the lady whom the cavalier serves, conferred with her own hand, it was thus ordered on this glorious occasion as each knight stepped into the field. It happened that one evening, soon after the conclusion of the nuptials, I was in the public audience-chamber, then daily held, when some young triflers began to banter me, inquiring whether I had yet received my favourite colour from my mistress. I know not whether they imagined, as was pretty generally credited, that I had never acquired the affection of any lady of the court, or whether they alluded still more maliciously to the partiality of the Empress, as she seemed to suspect. It is certain she looked much displeased, and the more so as the discourse terminated in a burst of laughter. Turning towards me, she said in the sweetest tone, 'It is scarcely fair, Count, that while I am present, your modesty should be put to the blush; you must enter the field as my cavalier; here is your device,' untying a green ribbon from her fine arm, which she extended towards me, almost overwhelmed with surprise and joy. Envy and malice became instantly mute, a becoming reverence was felt, and more than one, conversing afterwards upon the beauty and delicacy of the action, declared that they should have valued such a favour beyond the worth of a seigniory. The day appointed for the tournament being arrived, as I was standing at the entrance of my apartment arranging the order of my choicest dresses, intending to appear in some of my richest attire, the equerry of the Empress appeared with a present of two noble steeds, which her majesty entreated I would accept as her cavalier upon the approaching occasion. One of these was of Neapolitan breed, a charger of middling height, but full of fire and spirit. It was jet black, richly-caparisoned, shining in cloth of silver and gold; and the other was a Spanish jennet, of mixed colour, small in its limbs, beautifully caparisoned, and swift as a bird upon the course.

"Exactly at the appointed time I entered among the first into the field, bearing in my plumes and ribbons the colours of the Empress, who, to complete the honour conferred upon me, appeared arrayed in the same, seated upon a sort of throne in the lodge, surrounded by thousands of spectators. The Archduchess Dowager was there, rejoicing in the new fortunes of her daughter, with a train of the noblest ladies in the land, who had attended from the most distant provinces to do honour to the occasion.

"Just before I entered the lists I mounted another charger, bestowed likewise by the Empress, and rode into the ring. The champion who appeared there was of great strength, valour, and experience, and had already maintained the field against numbers of the boldest challengers. It was now my turn to break a spear with him, and the moment the heralds gave signal to start into action, I turned my eyes towards the court-lodge, and met those of the Empress fixed intently upon me. I felt as if suddenly inspired with more than mortal strength and ardour, and such was the force and fury of my charge, that I not only carried the first, but two following lances; in short, I bore away the honour of the day.

"Must I confess all my vanity? Such

was my secret triumph, that I would not have exchanged it at that moment for the richest diadem. Not that I was ambitious of vulgar applause, but that day I bore the ensign of my Empress, and proved myself not unworthy of the high distinction she had conferred upon me. Riding up to the royal lodge, I dismounted at the feet of the two princesses, by whom I was received with expressions of applause. They presented me with a rich sword, adorned with jewels, the prize of the victor of the field; while the Empress herself, in the excess of her generous spirit, drew a fine diamond ring from her finger, and presented it to me with compliments of pleasure and congratulation at my triumph.

"But the consummation of my wretchedness was now at hand. The Empress was preparing to join her august consort, attended by her mother, with the flower of all her nobility, at Gratz. I made one of her train, no less by command than from an unhappy inclination. Nor among the crowds of distinguished nobles who surrounded her did I seem to lose the least portion of my influence. She was even more kind and considerate than before, often declaring that since she was become the spouse of Cæsar, she should be justified in treating her friends with far greater kindness and consideration than she had formerly done. Nor was this all; she obtained for me the favour of her imperial consort, which he frequently displayed before all the court. This was no sooner apparent than I began to receive the obeisance and respects of my equals and superiors; all parties courted my attention, and I might well have indulged a little vanity. But I know not how it was: what to others would have been a source of the richest pleasure, in me gave rise only to feelings of sorrow and regret. I would gladly have exchanged all the power and splendour of Vienna for some quiet refuge in the desert, some secluded abode, such as Heaven has here at length assigned me. So far from entertaining an ambition to extend the sphere of my fame and influence beyond the rank which I enjoyed, I in vain attempted to interest myself in the intrigues and affairs of state. I could not enter into the usual pleasures of the court; my eyes still wandered, and rested only on the fine features of the Empress, observed in the contemplation of the mingled majesty, the grace, and the thousand surpassing charms that I found there, and only there. For my passion never betrayed itself beyond my eyes; but to these, when unobserved, I gave free and ample scope, and they told her eloquently all my hopeless anguish, all my love. And they dwelt upon her unreproved; they partook of no other delight; all else appeared vile and worthless to me. Too happy could I have continued to enjoy the mournful pleasure it afforded me! Dearly did I pay its price, for my passion was feeding upon my life. I lost all relish for company and conversation of which she did not form a part, and my health and slumbers became the sacrifice. My pallid looks bore evidence of the struggles within; I attracted the eyes of the whole court, and in a short time I fell sick.

"A slow fever preyed upon my vitals, and the physicians half despaired of my life. It was then I first became sensible how deeply my passion was returned. Whatever the power and influence of a

queen could effect in procuring the best attendance and advice, whatever the tenderness, compassion, and fears of the fondest mother or sister could display, were all lavished upon me at that period. The disease, however, had gained too great force, so that daily becoming weaker, I was soon reduced to extremity; my life was hourly despaired of though I still retained all my faculties as clear and lively as before, and was perfectly resigned to my approaching fate. My sole regret was a dread of not again beholding the object of all my hopes and fears, and my weeping eyes were now continually fixed upon her portrait. While thus engaged, taking, as I truly believed, a fervent and final leave of the features of the only beloved object upon earth, I heard a sudden disturbance in the ante-chamber, and in a few moments after the name of the Empress was announced. It is quite impossible to convey an idea of the emotions which at that moment swelled my breast; so violent and yet so delightful was the shock, that I was just on the point of expiring, when the voice of the Empress seemed to recall me into renewed existence. Approaching close to my side, she exclaimed in a tremulous and impassioned voice, on beholding the condition to which I was reduced, 'Alas! my fond and faithful servant!' and then in a lower tone she continued, 'Ah! Count, and can you leave me thus? I beseech you to pity me and live for me; from my hand receive the renewed health and strength which your physicians have attempted in vain to bestow. Rouse yourself, receive what I have here brought you; take it, and doubt not of the result;' and she administered the medicine with her own hands. She had even dropped it into a gold cup, without permitting my nurse to assist her, and I drank the whole off at her command. Whether it were the delight of again beholding her or the virtue of what she administered, it is certain that I soon felt greatly restored, so much so, indeed, that shedding tears of gratitude, I assured her in another interview that I had drunk life from her hands. Though she said little in return, the serenest joy was depicted on her countenance; she inquired into farther particulars relating to my illness, and the nurse and attendants having withdrawn, out of respect, to a distance, she proceeded to speak more confidently than she had ever before done. 'Too well, Count, am I aware of the melancholy origin of your sufferings, but do not yield, try to rise above them, and live for the sake of my love.' These words she uttered in so sweet, confiding, and earnest a tone, that I could not for a moment doubt her, and then yielding me her hand, which I pressed ardently to my lips, she left the precious cordial in the gold vase to my care, and took her leave. What with the restorative nature of the elixir and the joy which her presence had inspired, I felt as if created anew, my fever abated, and I was declared out of all danger. On my perfect recovery, however, I no longer appeared at court and in public as before, but secluded myself from state affairs as much as I was permitted. Secret affliction still preyed upon my mind, mournful and appalling images rose in my path, and vainly did I attempt to banish them from my eyes. A deep presentiment of future calamity weighed down my spirit, which future events more than verified. I loved the

Empress to distraction, I could no longer conceal it either from myself or from her; and though I offered up unceasing prayers to Heaven that I might be enabled to restrain my passion within the due bounds of duty and respect, a thousand schemes for its full indulgence would usurp, in spite of me, the possession of my imagination. With the most gigantic struggles, however, I succeeded in subduing it, more for her sake than my own; feeling my complete power and ascendancy, I scorned rather than feared to use them. For what, indeed, was life to me placed in competition with such hopes? Besides, I took more pride in her grandeur and elevation than if they had been my own. Yet a deep-seated inquietude had for ever destroyed my bosom's peace: she was great, she tried to make me happy, but I—I was the most wretched being upon the face of the earth. Ah! far unhappier had the veil been then withdrawn from my future destiny, and I could have beheld it in all its naked horrors.

"Thus wearing out my joyless and weary days, it was not long before the Empress became aware of the real state of my feelings. She had restored me to fresh life and vigour, and it seemed only to have added poignancy to my sufferings. Unable to support the sight, she one day called me to attend her, as she was walking in the royal gardens. Alluding at once to the unhappy state of my mind, she said that she often wept bitterly over the misfortunes of the companion and friend of her infancy. She could bear it no longer; she gently upbraided me for such a sacrifice of my time and talents, wasting the golden days of youth and manhood in hopeless sorrow—a wilful, passionate grief for what never could be obtained. 'Oh, my dear Count d'Arco!' she continued as the tears came into her eyes, 'if it be any consolation to know you are not the only sufferer (for I cannot see you die), you may indeed be consoled; I will repeat to you all I formerly promised to you. It is your late conduct that compels me to it; for it would seem that necessity and impossibility of success are no restraint, as in all other cases, upon the excess of your passionate sorrow. Surely I need not remind you, circumstanced as we are, of all that prudence and propriety require from us. What is it you intend, Count? to live and die thus wilfully unhappy? No, Heaven forbid! I would have your love for me produce far nobler fruits; and as you have always most truly and loyally served me, it would be strange indeed were you now to become the author of all my calamity. You are the sole staff and stay of your house, and you ought to think of establishing it in the land. How many in Germany would feel proud of your alliance! Cast your eyes around, and let me know your choice;' and then she added in a stifled and trembling voice, 'The Emperor and myself will vie with each other in lavishing our regard upon her!' Here she ceased, as if recovering from a strong effort, while I stood fixed to the earth, like a statue, unable to utter any reply. At length raising my eyes to hers, and heaving a deep sigh, I replied, 'Were it in my power, most illustrious lady, to appear as cheerful as I know the limits of my duty in regard to your imperial Highness, you would behold me as happy as I am now hopeless and miserable. What I have most to regret is the num-

ber of your benefits thrown away upon one who, however grateful, is incapable of taking advantage of them. But as it is the lot of humanity more or less to suffer, so it has been my unhappy fate to behold all the most desirable blessings, except the only one I valued, within my grasp; ambition, wealth, and influence became in my eyes worse than nothing—emptiness, ashes, dust! Bitter as it is, I must yield to my destiny; yet I would not willingly say anything to afflict you, my earliest companion, playfellow, and friend! Alas! my empress and queen, dreadful consummation of all my woes, forgive me! I am so very unhappy, far too unhappy to avail myself of your generous proposal. For I had rather suffer increased anguish for my loss than ever consent to receive consolation in the manner you wish me. Not that I feel less deeply the kind and noble motives that have induced your Imperial Highness to promote my welfare by every means in your power, more especially in this last instance, while at the same time I beseech you thus, upon my knees, to permit me to decline it!' 'What, then,' exclaimed the Empress in a disturbed accent, 'you will not allow me to make you happy in my own way!' 'Yes, most honoured and adored lady,' I returned hastily, 'provided Heaven would listen to my vows.' 'And what may they be?' she rejoined; 'quick, tell me, what they are. 'That I may be speedily restored to the state in which I was before your majesty saw me; that I may die; being unable much longer to sustain the passion that assails me, that haunts me with the power of a demon, both by day and night, compelling me to break through the bounds of respect and reverence due to you as my empress;' and bursting into a fresh flood of tears, I clasped her hands to my lips, as I again fell at her feet.

"'Oh, Heavens, Sigismond! what is it you have said?' she exclaimed in as angry a tone as she could command; 'is this the promise you gave me? You vowed that you would never leave me, and now we shall be compelled to part for ever. What have I done to offend you, that you should treat me thus? Have I ever broken the promise I gave you? Ah! ungrateful Sigismond, you are dissatisfied with the gift of this poor heart, of a love so different from your own. Should not this be sufficient to banish such a degree of hopeless sorrow from your breast? Reflect a moment upon my rank; think how much I have confessed to you, and continue miserable if you can. Hitherto I have shown the utmost confidence, expecting in return proofs of your fidelity and friendship. Your life is dear to me as my own; your affliction deprives me of repose; and if you truly love me, you will endeavour to surmount this idle grief before you give occasion to the world to treat our names with a degree of freedom fatal to our reputation, our honour, and perhaps our lives.' Then giving me her hand, not without the deepest emotion on both sides, I pressed it to my lips, and the next moment I found myself alone.

"From that period, though I did not wholly banish my former sorrow, I contrived to dissimulate it better; and on more mature consideration, I felt that the Empress had very good reasons for accusing me of ingratitude and indiscretion. Bent upon repressing, as far as possible, the excess of my passion, I

resumed my former plan of riding, hunting, engaging in the lists, and entering into all parties, affecting an air of serenity and pleasure that I was far from feeling. I was soon rewarded with the smiles of the Empress and the notice of her august consort, both of whom lavished upon me fresh marks of consideration.

"I persevered in this course for a length of time, and soon began to experience its good effects. Long habit, gradually producing a change in my feelings, led me to dwell less upon myself, and finally, upon the origin of all my woes. I became more tranquil, began to feel an interest in the affairs of life, and attended much less frequently in the suite and at the parties of the Empress. Just as I began to flatter myself that there was yet something to live for in the world, I heard of the sudden indisposition of her I had so long loved. At first it excited in the physician no kind of alarm, but it soon became more serious in its progress. The fever increased, while the languid looks and the extreme exhaustion of the patient after it had been subdued, gave rise to doubts, and doubts to fears. My former passion now revived with redoubled force; all her kindness and excellence rose fresh to my recollection, and I was truly to be pitied. Finding herself rapidly growing worse, the Empress expressed a wish to have her favourite physician, Gianforte, sent for from Padua, his reputation having spread throughout all Germany. No one's anxiety equalled mine to hear of his arrival. I set out to hasten his approach, and never was an oracle listened to with half the awe I felt when he first opened his lips. After hearing the opinion of her other physicians, who seemed to consider her illness more of a chronic than of an acute kind, he begged to be permitted to see her without loss of time. Upon his return, he declared that so far from there being no immediate danger as he had been led to expect, he did not think it probable that she could survive many days. Alas! who could pretend to depict the terrific shock, the horror that thrilled through my veins, when I heard such a prognostic uttered by so celebrated a physician and in so calm a tone. A sudden feeling of desolation overwhelmed my spirit; but I am sure you will excuse me; you will permit me to pass more rapidly over this portion of my story. Enough that the unhappy presage was fulfilled exactly at the period predicted. In her very last moments her thoughts were still with me, and she repeatedly expressed her wish that I might continue in the Emperor's favour, and enjoy the same honourable privileges that I had before done. During her illness I had frequent access to her, having ever been one of her most faithful officers, with the full approbation of the Emperor. Often would she raise her languid eyes to mine with an eloquent appeal I alone could understand; often murmur some unfinished words, as if aware of her approaching doom. One day feeling herself worse, she sent for me to her bedside, in the presence of the Emperor, and welcoming me with a serene and almost happy air, the moment she saw me, she said, 'I wished, my kind Sigismond, to see you once more before I die, in the hope of finding mercy and forgiveness.' I burst into a flood of tears on hearing these words, tears which not even the pres-

ence of the Emperor could restrain. 'Does it displease you,' she continued, 'that I am going to join the blessed spirits of the faithful and the good in the mansions of eternal love? There I may surely be permitted to pray that you may be better rewarded for your long and faithful services than my shorter sojourn here would permit. I have already recommended all my faithful servants to the Emperor, among whom, on every account, he well knows that you occupy the first place.'

"Addressing herself next to her royal consort, she thus continued: 'Did I imagine, my dear lord, that it would prove any alleviation of your regret at my not having presented you with an offspring to give you one well worthy of your adoption, I would point out Count d'Arco as best entitled to your entire confidence and regard; for he never betrayed his trust, nor ever committed a wrong, I feel well assured.' She then added other wishes, which were lost in my bitter sobs and cries. I was at length obliged to be conveyed almost by force out of the apartment, and laid upon my own couch. Not a moment's rest did I enjoy for a period of many days; so that, upon hearing of the fatal tidings, I was already in a high fever, which did not, however, prevent me from rising to behold, for the last time, her beloved remains. Alas! too surely did I find her laid out in state, surrounded by her weeping domestics and friends. What were the mingled emotions of my bosom as I approached that spot! When the funeral torches burst suddenly upon my view, when I recollected each familiar place where we had played together as children, grown up together, as it were, in the bands of youthful innocence, joy, and ripening love, along with all her numerous kindnesses and endearments, I felt struck to the very soul. Still, with a kind of reckless wretchedness, I advanced closer to the bier, and gazed wildly and wistfully upon those lovely yet majestic features, until the spectators began to think me either seized suddenly with indisposition or quite insane. I wept not, I uttered not a word, but I could not remove my eyes from that pale, and gentle, and sweetly majestic face, alas! even in death too lovely and beautiful!

"Upon recovering out of the strange trance in which I had been so long absorbed, I thrice attempted to run my sword through my body, until I was secured and borne away from the distressing scene. Yet such was the degree to which the Empress had been beloved by her servants, that even this excited no unusual suspicions; and when I became somewhat calmer, I seemed to hear a voice that whispered comfort to me, and peace and joy from another sphere. 'True, too true,' I exclaimed, as if in answer to the celestial sounds; 'for what is the end of all the love, the grace, the beauty, and the glory of earthly things? Place our faith, as we will, upon the world, and the votaries of the world, what shall we finally reap from its rank soil but ashes, dust, and tears? My beloved, my soul's mistress and sovereign, is gone; and shall I live again to all the follies and vanities of earth, deprived of the light and beauty, the very guiding star of my destiny, and without which I shall be driven upon life's troubled ocean, at the mercy of darkness, winds, and floods? Forbid it, Heaven! I would rather, far rather follow thee, O blessed spirit, safely into

port, where thou hast taken up thine everlasting rest. But I fear me I have not strength of wing to raise me to that heavenly height or merit the assisting influence of thy glory. Yet deign, exalted spirit, to receive the only sacrifice I can make thee—of myself: so may we thus be restored to each other's love in blissful paradise!'

"From that period, gentle lady, I never left my apartment until the last obsequies were performed, and even the public mourning at an end. My sufferings both of mind and body were extreme; and when I at length recovered, my first visit was to the Emperor. He received me very graciously, doubtless expecting that I had attended for the purpose of aspiring to the enjoyment of some of the fruits of the late Empress's kind and earnest recommendations. He seemed a little surprised then, when I candidly informed him that the circumstance of his royal consort's decease had so strongly reminded me of the vanity of all earthly pursuits, that, with his imperial majesty's permission, I felt a decided inclination to retire from the tumult and business of court; moreover, that I so far confided in his royal clemency and compassion, as to hope he would not refuse me his royal leave to take shelter in the secluded hermitage of the Penitent Friars. The Emperor regarded me very earnestly some time before he replied; whether he imagined that I was chagrined at losing the support of the Empress in the midst of my courtly career, or that he no longer wished to oppose my inclination, even if suspicious of the real cause or not, certain it is that he kindly accorded me the space of a year to consider further of the trial; so that, if at the close of that period I still persisted in my wish for seclusion, I might pursue my own pleasure. That year he wished me to spend in my travels, as the most likely method of removing my grief, and I consented to the royal wishes. After arranging my domestic affairs, I visited Italy, for the most part from a desire of paying my vows at several celebrated shrines, and beholding the territories of the Holy Church.

"Besides my own fortune, I had received handsome presents from the late Empress, the most precious of which I carefully preserved. A few of these I deposited, not without many tears, at the shrine of our Lady of Loretto, adorning the sacred image of the Virgin with gifts of which I esteemed every inferior object unworthy. The rest of my resources I distributed in pious alms, in sacrificial offerings and other holy uses, besides daily occupying myself in some works of charity, which I judged to be the sweetest incense I could offer up to the soul of my beloved, my infant companion, my early friend and benefactress, my sovereign, now no more. In heaven only, where all hearts are known, may she yet be mine!"

Rosita and Bread

The ten or twelve persons gathered together that evening in the *marquesa's* luxurious little parlor, intimate friends and relatives who had come to congratulate her on the anniversary of her name-day, had for the most part broken

up into separate groups, until someone remarked in a loud tone:

"It is as you have heard; they have separated. He remains in the same apartment where they have lived ever since their marriage, and she has moved away, taking her boy with her."

"And what sort of a husband is he, to stand that?" inquired an elderly lady, of venerable aspect.

"Wait till you hear which is in the wrong,—for one or the other of them must be," added another lady, who was young, with an alert and inquisitive expression.

"I believe," said the marquesa, "that if one of them is at fault, it is not he; because it was only a few days ago that he was here and was speaking of his wife,—and apparently he was still quite infatuated."

"That does not prove very much," interrupted the lady with the alert expression, "because when a man undertakes to deceive his wife, the first thing that he does is to throw her women friends off the track by making them believe that he adores her, so that they will repeat it to the one chiefly concerned."

"Heaven forgive me for putting in a word," interjected a dandified youth, "but he goes about completely absorbed in his business, and she is a very attractive woman; so, without meaning any offense, it seems to me that she ought to be glad to have a chance to convince herself how far the power of her beauty will go."

"Is she so conceited as all that?" inquired a feminine voice.

"To tell the truth," admitted the *marquesa,* "there is something mysterious in this unhappy ending of a marriage in which no one can say that the husband ever looked twice at another woman, or that the wife was even capable of doing wrong."

Hereupon a man no longer young, yet still preserving traces of earlier good looks, a man of pleasing personality and keen eyes, who had hitherto remained silent, joined in the conversation with the remark:

"Since they have not deceived or betrayed each other, and there is a child, and yet they have separated, I must say that I fail to understand. But who are they?"

"The Heriols. She was Rosita Castilla before her marriage."

"Rosa? Rosa has left her husband?" exclaimed the old gentleman in amazement. "Come, come, you don't know what you are saying, or else someone has maliciously misinformed you. Rosa is incapable of any act that could give her husband even the shadow of a reason for leaving her; while if he should deceive her, she has the wisdom, the virtue, and the resourcefulness to win him back,—and in the latter case, the magnanimity to forgive him. Let me tell you," and he now spoke with impressive gravity, "that women like Rosa are very rare, and that when they are spoken of, it is well not to speak lightly."

When they saw how seriously he took the matter and heard his emphatic conclusion, the whole company became silent, with the exception of the lady with the alert face, who without the least hesitation answered him as follows:

"That is all very well, Don Luis; but it does not alter anything that has been said. If he is not known to have formed

outside ties, and she is incapable of any—little frailties, and nevertheless, in spite of the child, they have separated, how do you explain it? On the other hand, she is not well off, although he earns a great deal; lack of means would check the tendency to go, each their own way; on the contrary——"

"Rosa would not be afraid to face poverty," rejoined the old gentleman warmly.

"Come, come!" retorted the lady, somewhat piqued, "I am not slandering anyone. I have no desire to meddle, only I know, I am quite positive, that something has happened, something queer. I can assure you that five days ago Rosa left her husband's home, with nothing but three or four pieces of furniture and as many trunks, and she took her boy with her; she is living alone with a maid-servant, in the Calle del Guadarrama, No. 92, I don't know which floor. Now say, if you can, that this is just idle gossip."

"What I can say," replied Don Luis, deeply offended, "is that I returned from Paris only yesterday morning, that I came here tonight solely to offer my congratulations to the *marquesa*, and that I know nothing of what may have happened. But, whatever it was, I am confident that Rosa will prove to have been wholly in the right. She is one of the loveliest and most charming women in Madrid,—you will admit that?" he spoke with no intention of pleasing his fair opponent. "No one questions her beauty, do they? Well, her intelligence and her virtue are equally beyond discussion."

In uttering these words, Don Luis made a great effort to appear calm, yet he spoke with such emphasis that not a man or woman ventured to answer, and the *marquesa* discreetly gave another turn to the conversation.

Shortly afterwards, Don Luis took his leave, and as he stepped into the carriage that was waiting at the door, he said to the coachman: "Calle del Guadarrama, No. 92, and drive fast."

"Has a lady moved in here, within the last few days, by the name of Doña Rosa?' he inquired of the door-keeper.

"Second floor and *entresol*."

Grave were the doubts which tormented Don Luis from the moment he left the *marquesa's* reception-room until his arrival here. As he mounted the humble staircase of this miserably cheap abode, he was continually asking himself: "What has happened to her? What has he done to that dear girl to force her to such a change as this? It means downright poverty to a woman like her! What a neighborhood, what an entrance, what stairs!"

With greater celerity than his years would appear to admit, he reached the second story; he knocked and the door was opened by a maid whose neat and refined appearance was in marked contrast to the poverty of the house. The narrow entrance passage, filled with furniture, trunks and boxes piled up at haphazard, showed how recently their owner had moved in.

"Where is she?" demanded Don Luis.

But before the servant could answer, a door opened from a small sitting-room also filled with household goods in course of adjustment, and a woman appeared who might be anywhere between the ages of twenty-five and thirty, a woman of exceptional charm, who threw herself into the old man's arms and burst into bitter and desolate weeping.

She was tall and slender, with a bright and exceedingly fair complexion, large eyes of a deep azure and full of intelligence and vivacity, yet tender and serene as though incapable of expressing any sentiment that did not spring from love or tenderness.

"My dear old Luis!" she said, between sobs.

"But what has happened, girl? What has he done to you? Because on your side——"

In face of a doubt, even when so timidly formulated, she drew herself up with a cold, proud smile.

"Then it did occur, even to you, that I might have done something wrong? Come in, come in, I want you to hear the whole story."

She led him into the sitting-room and they sat down together upon a tiny sofa; then, having remained some moments gazing at him affectionately in silence, as though seeking the best way to express herself or the proper point to begin, she proceeded as follows:

"First of all, answer the question that I am going to ask you. If anyone inquired of you who my father was, how he educated me, what sentiments he inculcated and developed in my heart, how far I satisfied his wish of what I should be, in short, to what extent I am capable of goodness, honor, and virtue,—what reply would you make?"

"I should say," answered Don Luis in his most natural manner, "that your father was a man of such fine honor that when he might have saved a large fortune merely by defending a lawsuit, he preferred to lose it all, in order to fulfil his obligations faithfully, even those which did not depend on any written document, but merely on his bare word; that later he recovered some part of his wealth, through the admiration and respect of all who knew him because conduct such as his secured him abundant credit; I should say that your education, exclusively under his guidance, was a prodigy of prudence and good judgment; that he taught you to be good,—I do not know how else to express it than to say that you never felt the necessity of fighting your desires or mastering yourself, because he had inspired in you an aversion to evil; and, above all, I should say that you are good by nature, in the same way that it is natural for you to have blue eyes and a bright complexion.—But what does all this lead to?"

"Then you feel sure that neither thoughtlessness, nor calculation, nor perversity, nor any other motive could induce me to make terms with dishonor?"

"Absolutely. If you were my own daughter,—and I have loved you like a daughter from the time when your father entrusted your future to me,—I could not feel a greater confidence in you. I have always held that if perfect happiness consisted in a clear idea of what is right and a desire to live up to it, then you ought to be perfectly happy."

"I won't admit that I am good. How often one is unjust and does wrong without meaning to! But what I do say is that our virtue, the virtue of women, does not consist solely in—how shall I say it?—in avoiding such conduct as brings dishonor and holds men up to ridicule."

"I do not understand you."

"Then listen to me."

She struggled for composure, brushing

back behind her ears the tresses which had slipped from their place, and in a voice which mirrored back by its weaker or firmer intonations the nature of her memories and emotions, she said:

"You are right! My poor father! What a man! Do you remember the time of the failure? And the dinner we had the day the final settlement was made? All ot us crushed, prostrated, excepting him! 'This being ruined,' said my father, 'has its advantages: now we shall know who are our real friends, now we shall know whether luck deserted me out of caprice or because it thought I deserved it.' Later we became comparatively well off again. Six months before his death, he drew me down upon his knee and said to me:

"'If am taken from you now, you will have an income of five or six thousand *duros,* a small matter in comparison to what you would once have had; but you can enjoy it in peace; none of the pleasures that this money procures you will have cost pain to someone else; whatever charity you bestow will not be in the nature of restitution.'

"That was the kind of man my father was! That was the training he gave me! Imagine my sensations when, in the course of time, I awoke to a realization that my husband was—absolutely the reverse. There are some who will say that I ought to have understood him beforehand. But how can a young woman really understand a man during the one or two years of courtship, just by talking with him at the theater or at dances,—a time when she is mainly concerned with looking her prettiest and he is thinking mostly of how to hide his faults?

"During the first weeks after our marriage, I was happy. Of course, I could not help realizing that Pepe was brusque and quick-tempered, although he succeeded in controlling himself or quickly repented of his outbursts, to spare my feelings. After we came home from our honeymoon, he took up his work again; while we were away, a friend had been entrusted with his cases. He worked hard, but I soon realized that he felt little enthusiasm for his profession; when he came home from the office, he was always in a bad temper.

"What preoccupied and interested him was not the real merits of the lawsuits, or the opportunity to throw light upon them, or the likelihood of remedying an injustice, but the prospect and the amount of the fee. It was his habit to make very high charges, and on more than one occasion this cost him serious disagreements, or brought him extremely unpleasant letters. At last I learned that he had the reputation of being unscrupulous and mercenary. Towards poor clients he was lacking in courtesy, almost in common humanity; towards the rich, on the contrary, he was wanting in self-respect, the one thing which he cared for was to be paid, paid. Sometimes he tolerated things which he had no right to tolerate. There was a certain banker who, in sending a check for a bill that he regarded as excessive, wrote somewhat after this fashion:

"'I am sending you the amount you ask, but I feel that I can no longer call myself the friend of a man who treats me with so little consideration.'

"I told Pepe that this seemed to me humiliating, and he answered that 'the important thing was that he had paid.'

"'It would be better,' I replied, 'if

you were paid a little less and retained the friendship of a man who may sometime get even with you for overcharging.'

"He looked me over from head to foot and rejoined: 'The best of all friends is a *duro*.'

"I tell you these details so that you may understand how I convinced myself of what he really is: he knows no higher god and no higher law than money. This brings us, at last, to the motive for our separation, or, more correctly speaking, for my irrevocable determination never to live with him again.

"One day a woman called at the house who was poorly dressed and had the appearance of a lady in reduced circumstances. She had come a number of times before to see my husband but he had always refused to receive her. This time she was shown in because the maidservant happened to open the door in place of the butler. Presently, from my sitting-room, I could hear Pepe and this woman raising their voices louder and louder. I went to the door and heard that she was crying, and words came to my ears that filled me with horror: 'robber,' 'compassion,' 'iniquity.' At last she went away, terribly excited, and white with anger, and from the hall doorway she called back, her voice choked with tears:

" 'I pray to God that, if you have any children, they will be made to pay for what you have done to mine!'

"In great alarm I went back to my room, called my maid, Faustina, in whom, as you know, I have absolute confidence, and, pointing the woman out to her from my balcony, just as she was leaving the house, I said:

" 'Take your cloak and follow her and find out who she is and where she lives.'

Pepe remained in an intolerable humor and gave orders that on no pretext whatever should that wretched creature be allowed inside the door again. I asked him who she was, and he replied that she was just a common termagant. To come to the point: Faustina returned with the woman's name and address. The following morning I went to see her. I hesitated a good deal before doing this; but I could not resist, could not overcome the desire to solve my doubts, because everything led me to suspect that Pepe must have done something very dreadful. Fortunately, the woman did not know me by sight; she knew only that Pepe had a wife, and that was all. The *concierge* of the house she lived in told me that the poor woman had been in better circumstances, but that she had now fallen into extreme poverty because she could not earn enough with her needle to support her child, a five-year-old boy.

"I climbed up to her garret, exactly the sort of garret that you read of in novels, and invented some sort of pious lie as an excuse for talking with her. The promise of a little charity prevented her from stopping to consider whether I was telling the truth or not. It took little effort to make her talk. She was loquacious, communicative, imprudently free of speech,—faults that were excusable because of her eagerness to explain how she had sunk from a position of affluence to one of absolute want; but behind her chatter and excessive frankness there lay and gradually became apparent, in all its hideousness

one terrible fact. My husband had robbed her of twenty-two thousand *duros!*

"The facts were quite simple. Her husband was a lawyer: on a certain occasion there was thought to be reason to hold him responsible for some irregularities in a lawsuit in which he was involved, and an attachment was issued against him. He at once came to Pepe, who was an intimate friend, and without taking a receipt or any written document, which for that matter, under the circumstances, would have been useless, entrusted to his keeping twenty-two thousand *duros* in government bonds.

"You foresee the rest? Later he was arrested, was kept in jail a year and a half, then was released fully acquitted, and when he came to claim the trust money, Pepe refused. That is to say, he did not refuse to pay it back, but, what was more infamous, denied that he had ever received it. The unfortunate lawyer died a few months later, and Pepe continued in his denials to the widow. I have since satisfied myself that Pepe used part of those twenty-two thousand *duros* for the expense of our wedding. What a foundation on which to build a life's happiness! I came away from my interview with that woman, convinced that she was not lying; Pepe's character and temperament served as evidence against him; but finally I decided to drive him into a confession, and this I succeeded in doing.

"I did a dreadful thing, yet not so dreadful as his own misdeed. I chose a night when he retired earlier than I, then waited until he was asleep, and at the expiration of two hours, when he had fallen into his deepest slumber, I carefully arranged the light so that it shone full upon his face, and then called to him in a loud voice:

"'Pepe, Pepe, Gonzalvez's money! Gonzalvez, Gonzalvez, where is his money?'

"He woke up with an indescribable start, and before he had time to collect his thoughts, like a criminal caught by the judge's astuteness, he answered wildly, red with anger:

"'Where is Gonzalvez? How do you know? Who told you?'

"But there was no need of these words; his expression, his alarm, were enough to convince me that the widow had told the truth. Oh, how I suffered! I swear that I would rather have found him unfaithful to me! A tempest of scorn and contempt arose in my heart. To think that this was the man whom I had married and who had received my first kiss of love!

"All my efforts to make him promise to return the trust money have been in vain; he denies, he insists upon denying, and each denial separates us further. We cannot be divorced, I know that, for they read me the code; but I have left him because I feel that the contact of that man would be degrading. I believe, Don Luis, that honor and conscience are independent of sex. He has dishonored me by his crime as much as I should have dishonored him by infidelity. I shall be legally his wife, I shall bear his name, and, what is more painful, my son will bear it; but I shall never again return to his arms nor eat of his bread. May those who can understand me by my judges."

Tents of the Arabs

THE KING.
BEL-NARB } *camel-drivers.*
AOOB }
THE CHAMBERLAIN.
ZABRA. *A notable.*
EZNARZA. *A gipsy of the desert.*

Outside the gate of the city of Thalanna.

BEL-NARB—By evening we shall be in the desert again.

AOOB—Yes.

BEL-NARB—Then no more city for us for many weeks.

AOOB—Ah!

BEL-NARB—We shall see the lights come out, looking back from the camel track; that is the last we shall see of it.

AOOB—We shall be in the desert then.

BEL-NARB—The old angry desert.

AOOB—How cunningly the desert hides his wells. You would say he had an enmity with man. He does not welcome you as the cities do.

BEL-NARB—He *has* an enmity. I hate the desert.

AOOB—I think there is nothing in the world so beautiful as cities.

BEL-NARB — Cities are beautiful things.

AOOB—I think they are loveliest a little after dawn when night falls off from the houses. They draw it away from them slowly and let it fall like a cloak and stand quite naked in their beauty to shine in some broad river; and the light comes up and kisses them on the forehead. I think they are loveliest then. The voices of men and women begin to arise in the streets, scarce audible, one by one, till a slow loud murmur arises and all the voices are one. I often think the city speaks to me then: she says in that voice of hers, "Aoob, Aoob, who one of these days shall die, I am not earthly, I have been always, I shall not die."

BEL-NARB—I do not think that cities are loveliest at dawn. We can see dawn in the desert any day. I think they are loveliest just when the sun is set and a dusk steals along the narrower streets, a dusk that is not of the night yet not of the day, a kind of mystery in which we can see cloaked figures and yet not quite discern whose figures they be. And just when it would be dark, and out in the desert there would be nothing to see but a black horizon and a black sky on top of it, just then the swinging lanterns are lighted up and lights come out in windows one by one and all the colours of the raiments change. Then a woman perhaps will slip from a little door and go away up the street into the night, and a man perhaps will steal by with a dagger for some old quarrel's sake, and Skarmi will light up his house to sell brandy all night long, and men will sit on benches outside his door playing skabásh by the glare of a small green lantern, while they light great bubbling pipes and smoke nargroob. O it is all very good to watch. And I like to think as I smoke and see these things that somewhere, far away, the desert has put up a huge red cloud like a wing so that all the Arabs know that next day the Siroc will blow, the accursed breath of Eblis the father of Satan.

AOOB—Yes, it is pleasant to think of

the Siroc when one is safe in a city, but I do not like to think about it now, for before the day is out we will be taking pilgrims to Mecca, and who ever prophesied or knew by wit what the desert had in store? Going into the desert is like throwing bone after bone to a dog, some he will catch and some of them he will drop. He may catch our bones, or we may go by and come to gleaming Mecca. O-ho, I would I were a merchant with a little booth in a frequented street to sit all day and barter.

BEL-NARB—Aye, it is easier to cheat some lord coming to buy silk and ornaments in a city than to cheat death in the desert. Oh, the desert, the desert, I love the beautiful cities and I hate the desert.

AOOB—(*pointing off* L.)—Who is that?

BEL-NARB—What? There by the desert's edge where the camels are?

AOOB—Yes, who is it?

BEL-NARB—He is staring across the desert the way that the camels go. They say that the King goes down to the edge of the desert and often stares across it. He stands there for a long time of an evening looking towards Mecca.

AOOB—Of what use is it to the King to look towards Mecca? He cannot go to Mecca. He cannot go into the desert for one day. Messengers would run after him and cry his name and bring him back to the council-hall or to the chamber of judgments. If they could not find him their heads would be struck off and put high up upon some windy roof: the judges would point at them and say, "They see better there!"

BEL-NARB—No. The King cannot go away into the desert. If God were to make *me* King I would go down to the edge of the desert once, and I would shake the sand out of my turban and out of my beard and then I would never look at the desert again. Greedy and parched old parent of thousands of devils! He might cover the wells with sand, and blow with his Siroc, year after year and century after century, and never earn one of my curses—if God made *me* King.

AOOB—They say you are like the King.

BEL-NARB—Yes, I am like the King. Because his father disguised himself as a camel-driver and came through our villages. I often say to myself, "God is just. And if I could disguise myself as the King and drive him out to be a camel-driver, that would please God, for He is just."

AOOB—If you did this God would say, "Look at Bel-Narb, whom I made to be a camel-driver and who has forgotten this." And then he would forget you, Bel-Narb.

BEL-NARB—Who knows what God would say?

AOOB—Who knows? His ways are wonderful.

BEL-NARB—I would not do this thing, Aoob. I would not do it. It is only what I say to myself as I smoke, or at night out in the desert. I say to myself, "Bel-Narb is King in Thalanna." And then I say, "Chamberlain, bring Skarmi here with his brandy and his lanterns and boards to play skabásh, and let all the town come and drink before the palace and magnify my name."

PILGRIMS (*calling, off*)—Bel-Narb! Bel-Narb! Child of two dogs. Come and untether your camels. Come and start for holy Mecca.

BEL-NARB—A curse on the desert.

AOOB—The camels are rising. The caravan starts for Mecca. Farewell, beautiful city. [*Pilgrims' voices off*: "BEL-NARB! "BEL-NARB!"]

BEL-NARB—I come, children of sin. [*Exeunt* BEL-NARB *and* AOOB. *The* KING *enters through the great door, crowned. He sits upon the step.*]

KING—A crown should not be worn upon the head. A sceptre should not be carried in Kings' hands. But a crown should be wrought into a golden chain, and a sceptre driven stake-wise into the ground so that a King may be chained to it by the ankle. Then he would *know* that he might not stray away into the beautiful desert and might never see the palm trees by the wells. O Thalanna, Thalanna, how I hate this city with its narrow, narrow ways, and evening after evening drunken men playing skabásh in the scandalous gambling house of that old scoundrel Skarmi! O that I might marry the child of some unkingly house that generation to generation had never known a city, and that we might ride from here down the long track through the desert, always we two alone till we came to the tents of the Arabs! And the crown—some foolish, greedy man should be given it to his sorrow. And all this may not be, for a King is yet a King. [*Enter* CHAMBERLAIN *through door.*]

CHAMBERLAIN—Your Majesty!

KING—Well, my lord Chamberlain, have you *more* work for me to do?

CHAMBERLAIN—Yes, there is much to do.

KING—I had hoped for freedom for this evening, for the faces of the camels are towards Mecca, and I would see the caravans move off into the desert where I may not go.

CHAMBERLAIN—There is very much for your Majesty to do. Iktra has revolted.

KING—Where is Iktra?

CHAMBERLAIN—It is a little country tributary to your Majesty beyond Zebdarlon, up among the hills.

KING—Almost, had it not been for this, almost I had asked you to let me go away among the camel-drivers to golden Mecca. I have done the work of a King now for five years and listened to my councillors, and all the while the desert called to me; he said, "Come to the tents of my children, to the tents of my children!" And all the while I dwelt among these walls.

CHAMBERLAIN—If your Majesty left the city now——

KING—I will not, we must raise an army to punish the men of Iktra.

CHAMBERLAIN—Your Majesty will appoint the commanders by name. A tribe of your Majesty's fighting men must be summoned from Agrarva and another from Coloono, the jungle city, as well as one from Mirsk. This must be done by warrants sealed by your hand. Your Majesty's advisers await you in the council-hall.

KING—The sun is very low. Why have the caravans not started yet?

CHAMBERLAIN—I do not know. And then your Majesty——

KING—[*Laying his hand on the Chamberlain's arm.*] Look, look! It is the shadows of the camels moving towards Mecca. How silently they slip over the ground, beautiful shadows. Soon they are out in the desert flat on the golden sands. And then the sun will set and they will be one with night.

CHAMBERLAIN—If your Majesty has time for such things there are the camels themselves.

KING—No, no, I do not wish to watch the camels. They can never take me out to the beautiful desert to be free forever from cities. Here I must stay to do the work of a King. Only my dreams can go, and the shadows of the camels carry them, to find peace by the tents of the Arabs.

CHAMBERLAIN—Will your Majesty now come to the council-hall?

KING—Yes, yes, I come.—[*Voices off*: "Ho *Yo!* Ho *Yay!* Ho *Yo!* Ho *Yay!*"] Now the whole caravan has started. Hark to the drivers of the baggage-camels. They will run behind them for the first ten miles, and to-morrow they will mount them. They will be out of sight of Thalanna then, and the desert will lie all round them with sunlight falling on its golden smiles. And a new look will come into their faces. I am sure that the desert whispers to them by night saying, "Be at peace, my children, at peace, my children." [*Meanwhile the Chamberlain has opened the door for the King and is waiting there bowing, with his hand resolutely on the opened door.*]

CHAMBERLAIN—Your Majesty will come to the council-hall?

KING—Yes, I will come. Had it not been for Iktra I might have gone away and lived in the golden desert for a year, and seen holy Mecca.

CHAMBERLAIN—Perhaps your Majesty might have gone had it not been for Iktra.

KING—My curse upon Iktra! [*He goes through the doorway. As they stand in doorway enter* Zabra, R.]

ZABRA—Your Majesty.

KING—O-ho. More work for an unhappy King.

ZABRA—Iktra is pacified.

KING—Is pacified?

ZABRA—It happened suddenly. The men of Iktra met with a few of your Majesty's fighting men and an arrow chanced to kill the leader of the revolt, and therefore the mob fled away although they were many, and they have all cried for three hours, "Great is the King!"

KING—I will even yet see Mecca and the dreamed-of tents of the Arabs. I will go down now into the golden sands, I——

CHAMBERLAIN—Your Majesty——

KING—In a few years I will return to you.

CHAMBERLAIN—Your Majesty, it cannot be. We could not govern the people for more than a year. They would say, "The King is dead, the King——"

KING—Then I will return in a year. In one year only.

CHAMBERLAIN—It is a long time, your Majesty.

KING—I will return at noon a year from to-day.

CHAMBERLAIN—But, your Majesty, a princess is being sent for from Tharba.

KING—I thought one was coming from Karshish.

CHAMBERLAIN—It has been thought more advisable that your Majesty should wed in Tharba. The passes across the mountains belong to the King of Tharba and he has great traffic with Sharan and the Isles.

KING—Let it be as you will.

CHAMBERLAIN—But, your Majesty, the ambassadors start this week; the

princess will be here in three months' time.

KING—Let her come in a year and a day.

CHAMBERLAIN—Your Majesty!

KING—Farewell, I am in haste. I go to make ready for the desert [*exit through door still speaking*], the olden golden mother of happy men.

CHAMBERLAIN—[*To* Zabra.] One from whom God had not withheld all wisdom would not have given that message to our crazy young King.

ZABRA—But it must be known. Many things might happen if it were not known at once.

CHAMBERLAIN—I knew it this morning. He is off to the desert now.

ZABRA—That is evil indeed; but we can lure him back.

CHAMBERLAIN—Perhaps not for many days.

ZABRA—The King's favour is like gold.

CHAMBERLAIN—It is like much gold. Who are the Arabs that the King's favour should be cast among them? The walls of their houses are canvas. Even the common snail has a finer wall to his house.

ZABRA—Oh, it is most evil. Alas that I told him this. We shall be poor men.

CHAMBERLAIN—No one will give us gold for many days.

ZABRA—Yet you will govern Thalanna while he is away. You can increase the taxes of the merchants and the tribute of the men that till the fields.

CHAMBERLAIN—They will only pay taxes and tribute to the King, who gives of his bounty to just and upright men when he is in Thalanna. But while he is away the surfeit of his wealth will go to unjust men and to men whose beards are unclean and who fear not God.

ZABRA—We shall indeed be poor.

CHAMBERLAIN—A little gold perhaps from evil-doers for justice. Or a little money to decide the dispute of some righteous wealthy man; but no more till the King returns, whom God prosper.

ZABRA—God increase him. Will you yet try to detain him?

CHAMBERLAIN—No. When he comes by with his retinue and escort I will walk beside his horse and tell him that a progress through the desert will well impress the Arabs with his splendour and turn their hearts towards him. And I will speak privily to some captain at the rear of the escort and he shall afterwards speak to the chief commander that he may lose the camel-track in a few days' time and take the King and his followers to wander in the desert and so return by chance to Thalanna again. And it may yet be well with us. We will wait here till they come by.

ZABRA—Will the chief commander do this thing certainly?

CHAMBERLAIN—Yes, he will be one Thakbar, a poor man and a righteous.

ZABRA—But if he be not Thakbar but some greedy man who demands more gold than we would give to Thakbar?

CHAMBERLAIN—Why, then we must give him even what he demands, and God will punish his greed.

ZABRA—He must come past us here.

CHAMBERLAIN—Yes, he must come this way. He will summon the cavalry from the Saloia Samáng.

ZABRA—It will be nearly dark before they can come.

CHAMBERLAIN—No, he is in great haste. He will pass before sunset. He will make them mount at once.

ZABRA (*looking off* R.)—I do not see any stir at the Saloia.

CHAMBERLAIN—(*looking too*)—No—No. I do not see. He will *make* a stir. [*As they look a man comes through the doorway wearing a coarse brown cloak which falls over his forehead. He exits furtively* L.]

What man is that? He has gone down to the camels.

ZABRA—He has given a piece of money to one of the camel-drivers.

CHAMBERLAIN—See, he has mounted.

ZABRA—Can it have been the King! [*Voice off* L. "Ho-*Yo!* Ho-*Yay!*"]

CHAMBERLAIN—It is only some camel-driver going into the desert. How glad his voice sounds.

ZABRA—The Siroc will swallow him.

CHAMBERLAIN—What—if it *were* the King!

ZABRA—Why, if it were the King we should starve for a year.

* * * * * * *

The same scene. One year has elapsed. The KING, *wrapped in a camel-driver's cloak, sits by* EZNARZA, *a gipsy of the desert.*

KING—Now I have known the desert and dwelt in the tents of the Arabs.

EZNARZA—There is no land like the desert and like the Arabs no people.

KING—It is all over and done; I return to the walls of my fathers.

EZNARZA—Time cannot put it away; I go back to the desert that nursed me.

KING—Did you think in those days on the sands, or among the tents in the mornings, that my year would ever end, and I be brought away by strength of my word to the prisoning of a palace?

EZNARZA—I knew that Time would do it, for my people have learned the way of him.

KING—Is it then Time that has mocked our futile prayers? Is he greater than God that he has laughed at our praying?

EZNARZA—We may not say that he is greater than God. Yet we prayed that our own year might not pass away. God could not save it.

KING—Yes, yes. We prayed that prayer. All men would laugh at it.

EZNARZA—The prayer was not laughable. Only he that is lord of the years is obdurate. If a man prayed for life to a furious, merciless Sultan well might the Sultan's slaves laugh. Yet it is not laughable to pray for life.

KING—Yes, we are slaves of Time. To-morrow brings the princess who comes from Tharba. We must bow our heads.

EZNARZA—My people say that Time lives in the desert. He lies there in the sun.

KING—No, no, not in the desert. Nothing alters there.

EZNARZA—My people say that the desert is his country. He smites not his own country, my people say. But he overwhelms all other lands of the world.

KING—Yes, the desert is always the same, ev'n the littlest rocks of it.

EZNARZA—They say that he loves the Sphinx and does not harm her. They say that he does not dare to harm the Sphinx. She has borne him many gods whom the infidels worship.

KING—Their father is more terrible than all the false gods.

EZNARZA—O, that he had but spared our little year.

KING—He destroys all things utterly.

EZNARZA—There is a little child of

man that is mightier than he, and who saves the world from Time.

KING—Who is this little child that is mightier than Time? Is it Love that is mightier?

EZNARZA—No, not Love.

KING—If he conquer even Love then none are mightier.

EZNARZA—He scares Love away with weak white hairs and with wrinkles. Poor little love, poor Love, Time scares him away.

KING—What is this child of man that can conquer Time and that is braver than Love?

EZNARZA—Even Memory.

KING—Yes. I will call to him when the wind is from the desert and the locusts are beaten against my obdurate walls. I will call to him more when I cannot see the desert and cannot hear the wind of it.

EZNARZA—He shall bring back our year to us that Time cannot destroy. Time cannot slaughter it if Memory says no. It is reprieved, though banished. We shall often see it though a little far off and all its hours and days shall dance to us and go by one by one and come back and dance again.

KING—Why, that is true. They shall come back to us. I had thought that they that work miracles whether in Heaven or Earth were unable to do one thing. I thought that they could not bring back days again when once they had fallen into the hands of Time.

EZNARZA—It is a trick that Memory can do. He comes up softly in the town or the desert, wherever a few men are, like the strange dark conjurors who sing to snakes, and he does his trick before them, and does it again and again.

KING—We will often make him bring the old days back when you are gone to your people and I am miserably wedded to the princess coming from Tharba.

EZNARZA—They will come with sand on their feet from the golden, beautiful desert, they will come with a long-gone sunset each one over his head. Their lips will laugh with the olden evening voices.

KING—It is nearly noon. It is nearly noon. It is nearly noon.

EZNARZA—Why, we part then.

KING—O, come into the city and be Queen there. I will send its princess back again to Tharba. You shall be Queen in Thalanna.

EZNARZA—I go now back to my people. You will wed the princess from Tharba on the morrow. You have said it. I have said it.

KING—O, that I had not given my word to return.

EZNARZA—A King's word is like a King's crown and a King's sceptre and a King's throne. It is in fact a foolish thing, like a city.

KING—I cannot break my word. But you can be queen in Thalanna.

EZNARZA—Thalanna will not have a gipsy for a queen.

KING—I will *make* Thalanna have her for a queen.

EZNARZA—You cannot make a gipsy live for a year in a city.

KING—I knew of a gipsy that lived once in a city.

EZNARZA—Not such a gipsy as I . . . come back to the tents of the Arabs.

KING—I cannot. I gave my word.

EZNARZA—Kings have broken their words.

KING—Not such a King as I.

EZNARZA—We have only that little child of man whose name is Memory.

KING—Come. He shall bring back to us, before we part, one of those days that were banished.

EZNARZA—Let it be the first day. The day we met by the well when the camels came to El-Lolith.

KING—Our year lacked some few days. For my year began here. The camels were some days out.

EZNARZA—You were riding a little wide of the caravan, upon the side of the sunset. Your camel was swinging on with easy strides. But you were tired.

KING—You had come to the well for water. At first I could see your eyes, then the stars came out, and it grew dark and I only saw your shape, and there was a little light about your hair: I do not know if it was the light of the stars, I only knew that it shone.

EZNARZA—And then you spoke to me about the camels.

KING—Then I heard your voice. You did not say the things you would say now.

EZNARZA—Of course I did not.

KING—You did not say things in the same way even.

EZNARZA—How the hours come dancing back.

KING—No, no. Only their shadows. We went together then to Holy Mecca. We dwelt alone in tents in the golden desert. We heard the wild free day sing songs in his freedom, we heard the beautiful night-wind. Nothing remains of our year but desolate shadows. Memory whips them and they will not dance. [EZNARZA *does not answer*]. We made our farewells where the desert was. The city shall not hear them.

[EZNARZA *covers her face. The* KING *rises softly and walks up the steps. Enter* L. *the* CHAMBERLAIN *and* ZABRA, *only noticing each other.*]

CHAMBERLAIN—He will come. He will come.

ZABRA—But it is noon now. Our fatness has left us. Our enemies mock at us. If he do not come God has forgotten us *and our friends will pity us.*

CHAMBERLAIN—If he is alive he will come. [*Enter* BEL-NARB *and* AOOB.]

ZABRA—I fear that is past noon.

CHAMBERLAIN—Then he is dead or robbers have waylaid him. [CHAMBERLAIN *and* ZABRA *put dust on their heads.*]

BEL-NARB (*to* AOOB)—God is just! [*To* CHAMBERLAIN *and* ZABRA.] I am the King! [*The* KING'S *hand is on the door. When* BEL-NARB *says this he goes down the steps again and sits beside the gipsy. She raises her head from her hands and looks at him fixedly. He partially covers his face Arab fashion and watches* BEL-NARB *and the* CHAMBERLAIN *and* ZABRA.]

CHAMBERLAIN—Are you indeed the King?

BEL-NARB—I am the King.

CHAMBERLAIN—Your Majesty has altered much since a year ago.

BEL-NARB—Men alter in the desert. And alter much.

AOOB—Indeed, your Excellency, he is the King. When the King went into the desert disguised I fed his camel. Indeed he is the King.

ZABRA—He is the King. I know the King when I see him.

CHAMBERLAIN—You have seen the King seldom.

ZABRA—I have often seen the King.

BEL-NARB—Yes, we have often met, often and often.

CHAMBERLAIN—If some one could recognize your Majesty, some one besides this man who came with you, then we should all be certain.

BEL-NARB—There is no need of it. I am the King. [*The* KING *rises and stretches out his hand palm downwards.*]

KING—In holy Mecca, in green-roofed Mecca of the many gates, we knew him for the King.

BEL-NARB—Yes, that is true. I saw this man in Mecca.

CHAMBERLAIN (*bowing low*)—*Pardon,* your Majesty. The desert had altered you.

ZABRA—*I* knew your Majesty.

AOOB—As well as I do.

BEL-NARB (*pointing to the* KING)—Let this man be rewarded suitably. Give him some post in the palace.

CHAMBERLAIN—Yes, your Majesty.

KING—I am a camel-driver and we go back to our camels.

CHAMBERLAIN—As you wish. [*Exeunt* BEL-NARB, AOOB, CHAMBERLAIN *and* ZABRA *through door.*]

EZNARZA—You have done wisely, wisely, and the reward of wisdom is happiness.

KING—They have their king now. But we will turn again to the tents of the Arabs.

EZNARZA—They are foolish people.

KING—They have found a foolish king.

EZNARZA—It is a foolish man that would choose to dwell among walls.

KING—Some are born kings, but this man has chosen to be one.

EZNARZA—Come, let us leave them.

KING—We will go back again.

EZNARZA—Come back to the tents of my people.

KING—We will dwell a little apart in a dear brown tent of our own.

EZNARZA—We shall hear the sand again, whispering low to the dawn-wind.

KING—We shall hear the nomads stirring in their camps far off because it is dawn.

EZNARZA—The jackals will patter past us, slipping back to the hills.

KING—When at evening the sun is set we shall weep for no day that is gone.

EZNARZA—I will raise up my head of a night-time against the sky, and the old, old unbought stars shall twinkle through my hair, and we shall not envy any of the diademmed queens of the world.

Thwarted Affection

AMONG other families, gentle ladies, that in times gone by are known to have ornamented our native city, one of the most noble, perhaps, was the Saracini, a house which still preserves unsullied its ancient worth and splendour. In the long list of names that constituted its different branches we find mention of one Ippolito, the sole surviving heir of a distinguished cavalier. At the period we are about to refer to, he numbered no more than eighteen years, was extremely

graceful and handsome in his person, of elevated mind and intellect, and much esteemed by his friends and fellow-citizens for the vivacity and courtesy of his manners. Now it fell out, as is most frequently the case with youths of a fine temperament, that he became deeply enamoured of one of the most beautiful and attractive girls in all the city, whose surpassing charms and accomplishments were celebrated wherever she had been seen. Her name was Gangenova, the youngest of three daughters left to the care of a widowed mother, the relict of Messer Reame Salimbeni, whose family ranked among the first in Sienna for numerous services rendered to the republic in periods of the greatest peril, though now, along with its arms and palaces, become altogether extinct, nothing of its past grandeur remaining but the name. The delight of all her relations, as well as of the society in which she moved, it was no wonder, then, that the fair Gangenova should so far have enthralled the soul of young Ippolito, that, by frequent contemplation of her beauties and accomplishments, he resolved to run all hazards in order to win her love. Nor had he, in the few opportunities permitted him of conversing with her, any reason for despair, since he rightly interpreted the tones and looks with which she occasionally addressed him.

But in consequence of the very strict superintendence of her mother, which was exercised with greater severity over Gangenova than over her elder sisters, the interviews of the lovers were very rare; a system of intolerance so little in accordance with the open and ardent character of Ippolito, that, despising the very particular forms and ceremonies which it exacted, he was apt to grow impatient for the enjoyment of a more unconstrained society with the object he adored. With this view he made known his wishes to the young lady's mother, leaving the terms of their future union, in the most liberal manner, wholly to her, and beseeching her only to grant him a little more of the society of her he loved. What was his surprise to receive a direct refusal, on the ground that it was the lady's duty as a mother to attend first to the disposal of her two elder sisters! an answer that threw the young lover into a paroxysm of mingled rage and despair. The grief of Gangenova was little less than his own, and her affection, gathering strength by opposition, was indulged with double freedom upon receiving the sanction of such an offer. Aware at the same time that her lover's conduct in attempting to obtain an interview added only to the jealous caution of her mother, she was at a loss in what way to proceed, being so closely watched as scarcely to be allowed to breathe the air, much less to partake of the innocent sports and amusements to which young persons of her age are attached. It was impossible, however, to preserve so strict a watch as to deprive them of all kind of mutual intelligence, and Ippolito became acquainted with her unhappy situation. She even entreated of him, in pity to her, that he would discontinue his assiduous attentions, and either absent himself, or feign absence, during a short period, from the city, as she grew fearful of the extremities to which her friends in their anger might proceed. At the same time, she besought him to consider this as a proof of regard, not of coldness or indifference, as she would

ever endeavour to show herself grateful, and worthy of the high opinion that he had so kindly and nobly avowed for her.

These tidings served at once to increase the passion that Ippolito already entertained, and the unhappiness he felt in being the unwilling cause of the least portion of suffering to her he loved, when he felt as if he could gladly have sacrificed his life to her happiness and repose. Still he exulted in the idea that she returned his affection, and he tried to flatter himself with the prospect of brighter days to come. And in order to convince her of the purity and disinterestedness of his attachment, he resolved, however difficult the task, to obey her wishes, and to leave for awhile his native place, giving out that he was gone upon a pilgrimage to the shrine of San Jacomo of Galicia. He was, moreover, desirous of thus proving the sincerity of the affection of her he loved, and of ascertaining whether her regard was likely to increase or diminish by distance; and with this view, having arranged his affairs and bid adieu to all his friends, as if on the eye of a long voyage, he assumed his pilgrim's dress, and, to the surprise and grief of all his acquaintance, left the city. When the unhappy maiden heard of his departure, she shed many tears, regretting that she had ever proposed so harsh and trying an alternative, and upbraided herself as the sole cause of every sinister event that might chance to follow, never having imagined it possible that he would venture upon so painful and hazardous a journey. And in this she reasoned well, for when Ippolito had pursued his way until about sunset, he abandoned the great road, and, striking into one of the thickest woods near at hand, he there deposited his pilgrim's mantle, cowl, and staff; then retracing his steps in another dress, he entered, about the hour when the gates were closed, without observation into Sienna. Proceeding direct to the abode of an old nurse, the only person whom he had admitted into his secret counsel, he there provided himself with everything requisite for his purpose.

Now, near the Church of San Lorenzo was a little country-seat, with a small orchard attached, belonging to Ippolito, both of which he had presented to his aged nurse, who, on her side, had always felt the same affection for him as for an only child. Next to this little tenement lay a spacious and beautiful garden, the property of the mother of the fair Gangenova, Ippolito's beloved mistress; and here with her daughters she was often accustomed to take the air and enjoy the fragrance of the new-blown flowers. "Surely," thought the gentle and enamoured boy, "here at least we shall hardly be suspected; nobody will believe me bold enough to seek her under her mother's very wing; let us only find an opportunity of conversing with each other, and I cannot fail to discover some means of bringing our difficulties to a happy termination." And solely for this object did he keep himself concealed, like a bird that shuns the eye of day, within the bounds of his little cottage ground, never venturing forth except late in the evening, when, scaling a lofty wall, he descended into the garden of his beloved Gangenova, and approached close under her chamber windows. Up the side of these there chanced to flourish a lofty and lovely mulberry tree, one of whose spa-

cious branches overshadowed the apartment in which she lay, and where her mother kept her, as being the youngest of her charges, constant company by night. Under its shade likewise Ippolito was wont to take his evening station, eager to avail himself of any opportunity of beholding or discovering himself to the object of his attachment.

In this way he was soon convinced that the sole chance he had of profiting by his situation was about the hour of sunrise, when he observed the fair girl appear on the balcony overlooking the garden, on which were placed a number of beautiful plants, interspersed with lilies and violets, from which she would cull some of the sweetest to deck her lovely breast and hair. There, too, he observed her amuse herself with a pretty linnet which had nested itself in the noble tree, and which, won by her sweet encouragement, would hop into the window and nestle in her bosom; and it was then this delight to watch her thousand gentle looks and motions, and to imagine how delicious it would be to appropriate to himself the whole of those kisses and caresses. Often had he been on the point of accosting her, however great the risk, when her mother, her sisters, or some one in attendance, suddenly appearing, would dash all his hopes, and compel him to be doubly cautious, lest a discovery should be the cause of fresh restraints over his beloved. He next resolved to avail himself of the assistance of his kind old nurse, who, under a variety of pretences, obtained admission into the mother's house, of which she took advantage to gain the ear of the young lady, and inform her of all that her lover had done for her sake; of his passionate attachment and devotion, so well worthy a return, and his extreme desire of beholding her once more. Finding her equally delighted and surprised with what she had already heard, the nurse ventured to reveal to Gangenova the place of her Ippolito's concealment; and the pleasure she experienced on finding that he was so near became almost too much for her to support. "Has he not, indeed, deserted me then? is he not really journeying far away, over seas, and in a foreign land, on my account? Oh, dear nurse! tell him that his image is engraven on my soul; that I am too blest, too happy, and never more will give him reason to complain!" Upon hearing these words, the good old dame, thinking that she had happily succeeded in her mission, returned as fast as she could, in order not to forget the least portion of the message, which she well knew would carry such joy to the soul of the young lover.

Ippolito preserved the utmost caution in his proceedings, and it was not long before Fortune seemed to favour his wishes; for keeping watch one evening very assiduously, he saw the arrival of a messenger bearing tidings that the wife of one of the old lady's brothers was taken suddenly ill, and entreated to see the mother of Gangenova without a moment's delay. She was thus compelled to set out and leave her precious charge for one night, at least, to her own discretion; and Ippolito believed that he had at length an opportunity of convincing himself of the reality of his beloved girl's affection for him, by inducing her to embrace the long-wished occasion, and to secure their happiness by flying together and uniting their fate

in one. Fired with the hope, he hastened to his usual station underneath the mulberry tree that overspread her chamber windows, and in order better to attract her attention, he shook some of its boughs, imagining that her beloved bird if nestling there would fly to her, and by its little cries and flutterings lead her to appear on the balcony. Not succeeding, however, in this, he hastily ascended the tree, when soon the affrighted bird, flying with timid cries into some neighbouring shrubs, uttered such loud and sorrowful tones as to startle the gentle girl out of her slumber, who, fearing some sad accident had befallen it, hastily ran to the window.

With a simple veil thrown over her neck and bosom, and her fine bright tresses carelessly yet gracefully arranged, she appeared in the eyes of her enchanted lover rather like a vision than a creature of mortal beauty, while a mingled look of anxiety and tenderness was impressed upon her countenance. Solicitous for the fate of her little companion, she cast her eyes eagerly on all sides, when, instead of her pretty linnet, the accents of Ippolito, eager to dissipate her alarm, met her ears. The next moment she beheld him nearly at her side, and he succeeded almost in reaching her chamber window, while he attempted to prevent her crying out by addressing her in the lowest and sweetest tone: "Fear not, my gentle Gangenova; it is your Ippolito who speaks; fear not, either for yourself or your little favourite, for soon he will resume his blithesome notes, secure and happy as before. But mine, alas! how different a fate, though far more fond, a thousand times more passionately devoted to you, serving you so long and faithfully! Had you the heart, then, my sweetest, to think I was now taking my woful pilgrimage far from thee, through remote and strange parts, perhaps gone upon my everlasting journey? Oh, no, no! I knew you had not, and I have been near you day and night ever since the period when I left my friends to go upon my feigned pilgrimage. For, alas! when I cannot turn my thoughts from you for a moment, how could I wilfully bend my steps another way? how could I find a moment's repose till I had laid my wearied limbs and my burdened heart as near you as I could possibly venture without quite breaking upon your hallowed rest? Hath not our poor nurse told you all I have done and suffered for your sake; my lonely days and sorrowing yet delicious nights, passed amidst the scenes you have loved, among the very trees, and fruits, and flowers, where you have wandered; nay, in these lofty and verdant branches that so richly and beauteously overshadow the sanctuary of my love? Often have I seen you at the glimpse of dawn gathering flowers or caressing your bird, yet venturing not to intrude, afraid of calling down still further anger from your jealous guardians upon your innocent head. But my fond and unceasing vows have wearied Heaven at last: your mother is gone, and the hour arrived that is to repay us for a world of anxiety and dread, the fear of losing thee, and all that promised to make life sweet to me. Yet our time is precious, and I came to gather from thine own lips that thou dost indeed honour me with thy love; that thou wilt deign to receive my plighted vows and loyalty unto death. And this I would entreat in the name

of all my anguish, all my fears for thee, by the horror of a rival's arms, and by thine own surpassing beauties, that amidst all our city's charms have alone succeeded in riveting my enchanted sight. Yet I know how all unworthy I am; how much better and longer thou deservest to be sought ere won. Still thou knowest my whole life and bearing, though thou canst not form an idea of the sighs and tears I have poured for thee. Pity me, then; and with pity let love and reason, let all the heavenly gifts you possess, plead in my favour, and induce you to receive me as your favoured and honoured lord." Here he ceased, waiting with eager and trembling looks for a reply: while the beautiful Gangenova, overpowered on her side by a thousand wild and sweet emotions, was almost unable to articulate a word.

Having descended into the balcony, on her sudden alarm, to recover her favourite bird, she had attempted on first hearing Ippolito's voice to fly; yet surprise and terror chained her to the spot; for having read the fabled metamorphoses of plants into mortals, and human beings into plants, on hearing a voice from the mulberry tree, her blood began to run cold, and her attempt to call out died away ere it passed her lips. Yet there was something in the tone that convinced her she need not fear, and gradually recovering her confidence, her heart seemed actually to swim in a tide of rapture before her noble lover had concluded his passionate appeal. "Dear Ippolito," she at length replied, "it grieves me that we are so situated that it would be dangerous to tell all I have thought and felt since last we met and parted, much less the delight I have at finding you safe and near me once more. But, alas! this is no place for you; speed away, I beseech you, and think me neither hasty nor unkind, as indeed I esteem all your love and goodness to me as tenderly as I ought. But I fear for you, my kind Ippolito, and I entreat you to bid me one adieu, and let me see you safely depart." At this moment, hearing a noise in the antechamber, and fearful lest her sisters should approach, Gangenova hastily drew back, while Ippolito, imagining that it proceeded from her room, and hearing a rustling noise continue for some time, was seized with sudden suspicions of some rival being harboured there, either by her sisters or the fair Gangenova herself. Maddened by this idea, he no longer remained master of himself, and in his attempt to reach her window from the tree so as to obtain a view of what was passing, such was the hurry of his spirits, that, missing his footing, he fell to the ground.

Startled at the terrific sound, the fair girl again rushed forward, bending as far as possible over the balcony, and calling on the name of Ippolito in a subdued and gentle tone; but no longer did the sound reach his enraptured ear where he lay deprived of sense upon the cold earth. Suspense and terror seized upon the heart of the tender girl when she received no answer; love urged her to afford him her immediate assistance, while fear of discovery restrained her steps. Unable, however, longer to control her fears for his safety, she hastily descended into the garden by a back staircase rarely made use of, having remained from ancient times as a retreat in seasons of trouble, and having its outlet at the extreme

part of the garden. And there, alas! she found him stretched under the mulberry tree, lying cold and pallid, apparently deprived not only of sense but of life itself.

Almost as insensible as he, she threw herself at his side. Upon recovering her consciousness, showers of tears expressed the intensity of her sufferings; her cries would have moved rocks and beasts of prey to pity, such were the piteous tones in which these words were uttered: "Sweet Heavens! what dreadful thing hath happened? What malignant star hath struck with death one of the best and noblest hearts that ever beat? Oh, where is the soul that but now shone in thy face? Wretch that I am, shall I never behold it more? Art thou fled, for ever fled, sweet guardian of my honour, my love, and peace? But what will betide them now when every tongue will be busy with my fame? Whither shall I turn for help, reduced to such sad extremities as I now am?" And while abandoned to her woe, the hapless girl thus poured her lamentations to the night, she never ceased her endeavours to restore the object of them by every means in her power, rubbing his heart and temples, joining his hands and lips to her own, and trying to breathe her soul into his. Finding that he yet gave no signs of life, she sweetly folded him in her arms and bathed his inanimate features with her tears. Ippolito's soul, just on the point of taking wing, seemed to welcome so much bliss; and suddenly recovering his suspended powers, he heard the sweet words she uttered, and found himself alive in her arms. It was then he felt himself amply repaid for all the trials he had undergone, the sweetness and ecstasy of the reward far surpassing all he had been able to conceive, in breathing his vows thus closely into her ear. The moment before, she was about to transfix her breast with her lover's sword in a paroxysm of despair; the next she found herself pressed to his breathing bosom, receiving, as it were, the gift of two lives restored to her at once. For some time they both remained doubtful whether to believe that all was real, and gazed upon each other as if in a dream, until the fresh spirit of their joy being somewhat abated, they sat down by each other, side by side, with that serene and ineffable pleasure which the imagined certainty of their bliss inspired. But it was destined, alas! to be of short duration; a voice was heard calling upon the name of Gangenova, gradually approaching nearer and nearer, so that they were compelled to part almost without bidding each other adieu.

The poor girl hastened, trembling, by the same path that she had left the house: she fancied in the disorder of her spirits that she suddenly heard the terrific howlings of wild beasts, accompanied by the most dismal screams and cries; and such was the impression they made upon her imagination, just after having taken leave of Ippolito, as to deprive her of the power of motion. It was long before she recovered even strength enough to regain her apartment, and with panting breast and dishevelled hair she threw herself upon the couch, still unable to banish the terrific ideas that haunted her imagination.

In the meanwhile, the sisters of Gangenova, being likewise freed from the superintendence of their mother, had been innocently enjoying themselves in their chamber, frequently calling the

fair girl by her name to come and join in their diversion. Paying little heed to her silence, they continued for some time to amuse themselves with their games, until one of them, by way of adding a little novelty to the scene, crept forward in the dark intending to surprise her in her own room. Still receiving no reply, she ran for a light, and on returning found her sister stretched upon the bed, resembling rather a lifeless statue than a breathing human form. Calling her second sister in great alarm, they made eager inquiries into the cause of her agitation, feeling assured that something extraordinary must have happened. The poor girl was equally unwilling and unable to reply, and her sisters, in some anxiety, despatched a messenger for their mother, who lost no time in returning to resume her maternal charge. With a little more authority, she insisted upon knowing the cause of her alarm, and upbraided her sisters severely for not keeping a more vigilant watch. Gangenova declared herself quite unable to account for the manner in which she had been affected, and the others professed equal ignorance as to the cause of her indisposition. In this dilemma her mother had recourse to the advice of the most expert physicians the city had to boast, which brought no alleviation, however, to her daughter's alarming symptoms, not one of them being able to discover that her illness was owing to some sudden surprise, while she, far more jealous of her fair fame than of her life, concealed from every one the real cause of her sufferings. Growing rapidly worse, she became extremely anxious to behold once more her beloved Ippolito, and recollecting the old nurse, she instantly sent for her, entreating that she would as soon as possible acquaint him with her situation, and find some means by which they might at least meet to take an eternal farewell.

Upon receiving these sad tidings, Ippolito grew deadly pale and trembled, though at the same moment he hastened to comply with her wishes. He assumed the dress of a poor traveller, with a false beard, so as to render it almost impossible to recognise him, and set out to beg alms at several houses adjacent to that of his beloved. As he approached the latter, the lady of the mansion herself made her appearance, half wild and distracted at the situation of her loveliest daughter. Informed of the occasion of her grief, the wily pilgrim, availing himself of the circumstance, bade her not despair, as the power of the Lord was infinite, and His goodness equal to His power. Moreover, with His aid, he had himself become skilled in all the virtues of almost all the plants under the sun, and had devoted his knowledge of herbs and juices to the relief of his unhappy fellow-creatures, besides possessing secrets adapted to every species of disease. The poor credulous old lady raised her hands to heaven in gratitude upon hearing such consolatory words, vowed that he had been peculiarly sent by Providence, and insisted that he should be instantly introduced to her unhappy girl. The moment Ippolito beheld her, he perceived that the tidings he had received were indeed too true. So much was he shocked, that he could with difficulty support his character; more particularly when he saw, from the brightening features of his beloved, that she instantly

recognised him. Taking, then, the hand of the suffering girl within his own, as if to feel how fast her life-blood ebbed, he begged her attendants to stand apart while he proceeded to try his secret prayers and charms in his own way. Ippolito was thus enabled to learn the real source of her illness from her own lips. Beholding him with a mixture of tenderness and pity that added momentary lustre to her dying charms, she attempted, in those low soft tones he so much loved, to infuse balm into his wounded spirit. Painfully sensible of the extent of his loss, Ippolito from very grief was unable to utter a word, much less to ask the needful questions of his beloved. Wildly pressing his hand, she besought him never to forget the tender love he had borne her, and which she had seldom been happy enough to tell him how warmly and deeply she returned. "For joyful, oh! very joyful, my Ippolito," she continued, "would my departure have been to me before now, had not solicitude for your fate detained me. As it is, I die content, nay, grateful, for two unexpected benefits: the one to have seen you thus, to hear you, and feel your hand in mine; and the other, to know that I lived and that I died beloved by my most noble and faithful-hearted Ippolito!"

It was now that the latter attempted to console and encourage her, declaring it would be his only pride to fulfil her wishes in the minutest point; but here his voice failing him through his fast-coming tears and sobs, he laid his aching head down by the side of his beloved's, and there remaining for a short time as he breathed forth a soul-distracting adieu, he raised it again painfully, passed his hand over his eyes, and looking his last look, left the apartment. He then joined her weeping mother, and so far from holding out any hope, he said that pity for the sad and dying state in which he had found the poor patient had drawn scalding tears from his eyes. And he had not long been gone before the gentle spirit of his love, as if unable to continue longer without him, prepared to take wing, and in a few hours actually fled, as if to prepare in some happier scene a mansion of rest for their divided loves. For the wretched Ippolito, though able to bear up long enough to behold her beloved relics consigned to earth, had no sooner witnessed all the virtues and charms he had so fondly esteemed and loved for ever entombed in the vault of the Salimbeni, than, just as the ceremony was about to close, he fell dead at the foot of her marble monument. So strange and sudden an event threw the surrounding company, by whom it was regarded as little less than a miracle, into the utmost surprise and confusion, all of them believing that Ippolito Saracini was then on his way to the shrine of St. Giacomo of Galicia. His unhappy parents, hearing of this his untimely end, hastened to join their tears with those of the mother of the beauteous Gangenova, by whose side the faithful Ippolito was laid.

Dorothea of Seville

In the celebrated city of Seville, the capital of Andalusia, resided a foreign merchant named Micer Jacobo. He was of an excellent family, possessed of considerable wealth, and highly respected in his profession. He had been married in early life to a lady of a noble family in Seville, who died a few years after their marriage, leaving him the parent of three children. The two elder were boys, and were educated with all the care which became their rank in life; the youngest, being a girl, was brought up in a convent of nuns, where she was taught everything that was deemed in those days necessary to form an accomplished female.

The favours of fortune are held by a most uncertain tenure; and no class of persons experience her mutability more than merchants, whose possessions are estimated by the size of their purses, and the nature of the times, and who seldom know the medium between abundance and poverty.

It happened that the two sons of the merchant, who had been on a voyage to the Indies, were on their return with the produce of their negotiation, amounting to a large sum in gold and silver. They were already within sight of the bar of San Lucar; almost, as it were, on the threshold of their home, when a violent tempest arose, which drove them from the port; and the vessel, becoming unmanageable, foundered upon a reef of rocks, and every body on board perished.

The unfortunate father, overwhelmed with the afflicting intelligence of the death of his children, and the total wreck of his fortunes, was not able to bear up against the calamity, and survived his misfortunes but a few days, leaving his orphan child destitute on the world.

At the period of this terrible bereavement, Dorothea (such was her name) was still under the maternal protection of the nuns. She found herself in so short a space of time, deprived of friends and fortune; and was doomed thus early in life to experience all the vicissitudes attendant on affluence and poverty. Seeing herself so utterly destitue, the first idea that suggested itself to her was, to embrace a religious life. Those employments which had hitherto been followed as amusement, were now to be considered as necessary occupation; and the little elegancies which she had fabricated as presents, were in future to be the only means by which she could gain an honourable subsistence.

The good nuns with whom she had so long resided, conceiving a great regard for her, and pitying her forlorn condition, were anxious that she should still continue with them; but as their will was regulated by their Superior, it was ordered otherwise; for in a few days the poor girl received intimation, that she must either pay a certain sum to be admitted amongst the sisterhood, or quit the convent. Not having the means of complying with the former, she took the latter course, and in com-

pany with some young persons of respectability, though almost in an equally destitute condition with herself, she engaged some humble apartment, with the resolution of gaining a subsistence by labour. She was dextrous with her needle, and her talent was so excellent in embroidery, that her work had already gained her some reputation in the city.

Her extreme beauty and misfortunes—her virtue and amiability, were likewise so well known, that there was but little doubt of her finding sufficient employment. Her patience under misfortune, and the cheerfulness with which she passed from a life of ease to that of labour, were considered as a rare example to all young persons of her time.

The Archbishop, having occasion to order some work in embroidery, and finding that none could do it so well as Dorothea, employed her, and promised that she should be well recompensed. It was necessary, in consequence of the extreme fineness of the work, that the gold of which it was partly constructed, should be of a better quality than any she possessed; she was therefore obliged to go among the shops in the city, though accompanied by some of her companions, to choose some for her purpose.

They were recommended to the shop of a young man who had not long been in business, but who had already contrived, by the fairness of his dealings and the quality of his merchandise, to establish a good reputation. Dorothea wished to purchase enough to finish the work, to save time and the inconvenience of going from home, but finding that the money paid to her in advance would not be sufficient to pay for the gold she required, she intimated to the dealer her intention of returning for the remainder when her work should be in a state of forwardness.

The young man, however, struck with the beauty and manner of his fair customer, and seeing that want of money alone prevented her from completing the purchase, would on no account allow her to be disappointed by any such consideration. "My dear young lady," he said, "if the gold is such as suits your purpose, I beg you will take as much as is necessary without troubling yourself about immediate payment: I am in the habit of giving credit for sums of much greater consequence, and without half the satisfaction that this would afford me." They were all charmed with such unexpected courtesy; and Dorothea, taking the quantity she originally intended, paid what money she had brought, and left her name and address with the young man as security for the remainder.

Dorothea, in taking away the young man's gold, had, though without the slightest design on her part, likewise deprived him of his heart; and after the departure of his fair customer, poor Bonifacio discovered, to his cost, that the return of his merchandise would hardly repay his loss. His mind was so engrossed by the charming image he had beheld, that he could think of nothing else; and considering from what he could judge of her circumstances, that an offer of marriage from a respectable man would not be treated lightly, he determined to make enquiries respecting her.

He found no difficulty in making himself acquainted with all the par-

ticulars of her misfortune and of her present situation, with which he remained exceedingly afflicted, seeing, as he thought, an insurmountable objection in the inferiority of his own condition in life. It was true that she was poor; but she might, nevertheless, be imbued with all the prejudices of birth, and consider an alliance with him, although in superior circumstances to herself, to be incompatible with her former ideas of situation and rank. When he thought of her beauty, her good qualities, and the reputation she enjoyed throughout the city, he could not but consider her as a treasure too far removed from him to hope to gain; and he despaired, when reflecting on his own unworthiness and slender pretensions, of creating a sufficiently favourable impression to counterbalance his deficiencies.

But, as true love is not easily disheartened by difficulties, Bonifacio, relying on the correctness of his intentions, determined to neglect no means which opportunity might afford him of acquiring the esteem of his mistress. He found no difficulty, from the pretexts which his business afforded him, of introducing himself to the little *coterie* of which Dorothea was a member; and as his conversation was always marked by cheerfulness and good humour, he soon became a welcome visitor. He proceeded with great caution; and by a variety of little attentions, without bearing the appearance of officiousness, he ingratiated himself into the good opinion of all.

Amongst the companions of Dorothea was one, who, from her greater age and experience, was entrusted with the direction of their little establishment, and she was treated by them with the greatest respect. It was to her that Bonifacio more particularly directed his attention; and having gradually and with great prudence made known to her his intentions, he solicited her assistance in his behalf. The good old lady, having a high opinion of Bonifacio, readily promised to assist his views with her young friend; and choosing a favourable opportunity, communicated to her the young man's proposal, respecting which she now urged her favourable consideration.

Her companions, likewise, with whom Bonifacio was a great favourite, praised his good qualities, and did all in their power to forward his suit. Dorothea listened to the reasons by which the old lady supported her opinion, and in the end committed herself entirely to her guidance. Great was the joy of Bonifacio when he heard of the successful commencement of his hopes; and in fine, to cut matters short, the marriage was celebrated amidst the general congratulation of their friends. They lived happy and contented in their new condition, to which they were still more endeared by the affectionate regard they entertained for each other, founded on their mutual virtues and good qualities.

The evil one, though he sometimes closes his eyes, never sleeps, and is more especially on the watch to interrupt the peace and harmony which is generally expected from the union of well-regulated minds. He invokes every power of which he is master to his aid; and uses so much more secrecy and diligence in the accomplishment of this evil intention than is ever employed in good purposes, that he not unfrequently succeeds. This poor young lady, there-

fore, did not escape his treacherous wiles; and even though her virtue seemed proof against his machinations, he did not on that account relax in his endeavours. He assailed her when visiting her friends, at church, and during the most solemn ordinances; even at the communion, he caused her inquietude by presenting her continually with the most nefarious instruments of his wickedness, disguised under the appearance of young men, handsome, noble, generous, and gallant; who, whenever she made her appearance, never failed to testify their admiration and solicit her regard.

But little advantage did they gain from these importunities; the virtue and good conduct of Dorothea was proof against such ineffectual attacks; and she determined in future to expose herself as little as possible to such inconvenience by remaining more closely at home. When this resolution became known by her continued absence, the street in which she lived became a favourite resort, each seeking by any means an opportunity of seeing her, though without effect.

Amongst the gallants who sought to attract her attention, and who were all of the principal families of the city, was the Lieutenant thereof, a young man, unmarried and wealthy. He lived in the house opposite to that of Dorothea, in the upper and principal stories, so that he could at any time overlook the more humble habitation of his neighbours, from his windows and balconies; indeed, in so complete a manner, that Dorothea and her husband could hardly retire at night, or rise in the morning, without being observed.

With this advantage, the Lieutenant made his advances with great facility, though without having any result to boast over his more fortunate rivals,—Dorothea still remained without reproach, and even without suspicion.

Amongst the number who composed this goodly brotherhood, thus seeking to undermine the virtue of an humble, but innocent female, was a cavalier of Burgos, who was remarkable for his handsome appearance, was of good family, and possessed a handsome estate; qualifications which, favoured by a certain frankness and liberality of disposition, were considered sufficient to make an impression on the most obdurate heart.

But the virtuous resolution of Dorothea was so well grounded, that she might have laughed at all the little contrivances made use of to win her from her duty, had not the wary fowler, seeing the inefficacy of common art, resorted to the most subtle deceit, though in the most innocent guise, to entrap the simple dove.

This cavalier, who was called Claudio, had in his possession a white female slave, who, though born in Spain, was of Moorish parentage. She was remarkably graceful in her person, and was moreover exceedingly clever, and of good address. Claudio sent for her one day, and having told her how he was situated with regard to Dorothea, asked her advice how he should proceed. The slave, having made herself acquainted with all the circumstances, replied to her master, laughing all the while, "What, my dear Señor—what mountain do you wish to remove, what sea to agitate, or what dead person to re-animate, that you should thus afflict yourself, and make so little of me.

"The difficulties which seem to discourage you, do not dishearten me—with a little trouble and patience I will conquer them. Do not despond, therefore, and trust me, that within a few days I will deliver the pretty bird into your hands, or my name is not Sabina." From that moment she took the negotiation in hand, and commenced her play with as much circumspection and ability, as one who begins a game of chess with the determination to give check-mate. She collected a quantity of the choicest flowers that could be procured, and weaving them with great care and ability into a chain garland, she went to Bonifacio's shop, where she stated herself to be the servant to a lady abbess of a convent of nuns, who, having occasion for some gold of a superior quality to finish some ornament for the day of Saint John, and hearing the good repute of the article manufactured by Bonifacio, requested two pounds of the very best he could procure, and sent him the nosegay as a present. She likewise hinted to the trader, that she took the present quantity merely to prove it, and that she should return every week for a supply, if the quality answered their purpose.

Bonifacio was delighted with such a liberal customer, and was no less pleased with his present, from the choice flowers with which it was composed, and the taste with which it was fabricated.

Immediately when the girl was gone with the gold, Bonifacio flew to his wife with the beautiful nosegay, which was received by her with as much delight as was evinced by her husband in presenting it. When she was informed, too, whence it came, it gave her still greater pleasure; for she recollected the happy days of her childhood, when her time was employed in occupations of a similar nature, amongst those of the same class, whom she still loved and respected. She requested of her husband, that when the servant should again visit his shop, he would invite her within, as she had a great desire to converse with her of the convent.

On the following week, Sabina again visited the trader, and said that the gold was so good that she required the same quantity as before, and had brought another present from her lady to him, together with a little image of the virgin and a rosary, so exquisitely worked, that it was quite a curiosity. When Bonifacio saw it, he declared that his wife would not accept it, unless presented by the bearer; to which Sabina gladly consented, and congratulated herself that her plot had succeeded so well, at the same time feigning extreme surprise to find that he was a married man.

"Ah! you wag," she cried, "you are joking: it was but the other day that my lady was saying, that she knew a young person that would just suit you for a wife; very handsome and rich." "Many thanks," returned Bonifacio; "but if you will do me the favour to go up stairs, you will find that my wife is both handsome and rich; and, moreover, that we live as happily as possible."

"If I thought you were not deceiving me," said Sabina, "I would go."

"Of that you may rest perfectly assured," replied Bonifacio; "come, let me lead the way."

Sabina, pretending no longer to doubt his assertion, followed him to his wife's

apartments, where she no sooner beheld her, than, changing her surprise into admiration, she praised her beauty with such grace, and offered her services and friendship so warmly, that any one who heard might have supposed her language to be dictated by the most sincere and kindly feeling. The embroidery, and the different works with which Dorothea was employed, excited her attention, and elicited her praise. "Oh! how beautiful are these works," she exclaimed; "how sorry I am that my mistress is not here to admire them; I foresee that it would require but little to make you friends: when I relate to her what I have seen, how she will envy me! I declare it will be quite a sin not to make you acquainted. However, now I know you, I shall come and see you very often." With these words, and other expressions of good will, she took leave of Dorothea; and, paying Bonifacio for his gold, she departed.

From that time forth she continued every day to repeat her visits: sometimes she called for gold, and at others saying to Bonifacio, that it would be a sin to pass his door without calling to see his beautiful wife. Occasionally she called with some present, and artfully endeavoured to excite in Dorothea a wish to visit the convent of her assumed mistress.

When, at length, it appeared to Sabina that the time had arrived when she might venture to realize her plans, she arose early one morning, and taking two small baskets, she filled one with sweetmeats, and the other with fruit of the earliest and choicest description she could procure. With these she repaired to the house of Bonifacio, and presenting them to Dorothea, told her they were the earliest gathered fruits of the season, and that the Abbess, her mistress, thought they could not be more worthily offered than to her.

After receiving the thanks of Dorothea, she added, "that her mistress was desirous that she should oblige her in two things,—the first and principal was, that the following Monday, eight days from that time, was the feast of the blessed St. John the Baptist, and that on the Sunday evening, his holy vesper, she should go to the convent and do penance, and pass a day or two with the nuns, who would, on that occasion, amuse themselves in a variety of ways, which could not fail to be agreeable to her."

She further informed the wife of Bonifacio, "That several female relations of the nuns were about to visit the convent at the same time, to join their innocent festivities; and that they would call for her and conduct her thither in their company." The second request was merely "That she should give, as an offering to the saint, two pounds of gold thread to work on an ornament for the altar."

"As to the gold," replied Dorothea, "I will give it with all my heart; and, indeed, I should be happy to comply with the wish of my lady the Abbess, if I were my own mistress. You know, Sabina, that there is another whose will must be consulted before I can pronounce, YES, or NO."

"And I promise him," returned Sabina playfully, "that it will be an unlucky word if he should say NO; I would not stir hence for these eight days that are wanting to the feast, without taking you with me. Indeed, my mistress will take no refusal; and

it would be hard to deny her first request, particularly when her expectation has been so much raised by the accounts I have given of your beauty and understanding."

"Nonsense, Sabina," said Dorothea, "how could you say so much of an elderly dame like me?"

"Old, do you say," said Sabina laughing; "you had better tell me that spring is the end of the year, or that May is December; I should be just as likely to believe you. Ah! you wicked thing, you have not lost your vanity yet, I see." Bonifacio and his wife both laughed at her pleasantry; and the good-natured husband, without suspecting there was a snake in the grass, immediately gave his consent.

"On my life, Sabina," said he, "you have pleaded irresistibly; and as our lady the Abbess has done us the honour to request my wife's company, I cannot think of refusing her. Should the ladies of whom you spoke pass this way, and will call for her, they can go to the convent together."

Sabina was almost beside herself with joy at these words, as much from the secret pleasure she took in mischief, as from the gratification of having successfully achieved her undertaking. She lost no time in returning home, and hastily throwing off her mantle, ran to inform her master of the success of her negotiation. Claudio was obliged to guess at the meaning of her incoherent declarations; for so rejoiced was she, that her exclamations were more those of an insane person that of one celebrated for acuteness of understanding. Claudio was no less delighted to think that the stratagem had succeeded, and for the whole week could only speak of his anticipations; while his confidant, Sabina, was never weary of discussing an affair which redounded so much to the credit of her own talent and dexterity.

Sunday at last arrived, the day on which they had appointed to put their notable scheme into execution.

Sabina had engaged a few females subservient to her master's interest to assist her in the plot, and dressing some as married women, and others as duennas, she set off for Bonifacio's house. On their arrival, he answered the door himself, and seeing such an apparently respectable company, after paying his compliments, called down his wife, who was already waiting for them. She came gaily down to meet them, quite delighted at the anticipation of the amusement promised her, and at the pleasure of making so many amiable acquaintances.

After accosting them with much good nature and affability, she took leave of her husband, and, encircled by her new friends, departed for the convent.

When they were at some distance from the house, proceeding, as Dorothea supposed, to visit the worthy Abbess, and amusing themselves by the way with lively and innocent conversation, one of the ladies suddenly stopped, and exclaimed with evident chagrin, "Mercy on me, how came we to forget Doña Beatrice, whom we invited, and who, I dare say, is now waiting at home expecting us!"

"God bless me," cried another, with well affected surprise, "how could we be so negligent! I vow by the bones of my mother, that I no more recollected her than I do the first dress in which I ever appeared. However, we

cannot go without her, and so, if we turn down this street, we shall not lose much time in calling for her."

With that, one of the ladies who was the most in advance, and who, with amply folded petticoats, and a rosary of a most portentous appearance suspended from her neck, seemed the most devout and matron-like of the party, immediately led the way directed, and was followed by the rest.

As it may be supposed, the house of Doña Beatrice was no other than that of Claudio, at the door of which they knocked for admittance. The summons was answered by a servant, who, opening a window, demanded their business, and whom they wanted. The elderly and respectable matron immediately replied, "Go and tell thy mistress that she must hasten and descend quickly, for her friends are waiting." The servant retired, as though to give the message, and shortly returning, opened the door and said, "My mistress hopes you will excuse her for detaining you a little longer; but requests you will take seats in the parlour, and she will be with you as quickly as possible."

The ladies then entered a very elegant room, and seated themselves to await the arrival of Doña Beatrice, but the two who accompanied Dorothea, passed with her into an adjoining apartment. It was very splendidly furnished; the hangings were of blue and silver; and in a recess was an elegant bed, very richly ornamented. There was a smaller chamber or boudoir adjoining, in which the three ladies seated themselves; and Dorothea was sufficiently amused with the objects of art and costly workmanship which surrounded her, not to notice any strangeness in the proceedings.

They had been there but a short time, when one of the ladies rising, exclaimed, "This is more than mortal patience can endure. I'd bet a trifle Doña Beatrice is not yet out of bed; let us go and see what she is about, sister," and taking her feigned sister by the arm, the pair hurried out of the apartment, leaving Dorothea alone.

The wife of Bonifacio having satisfied her curiosity, now finding herself alone, and in a house of which she did not even know the owner, began to feel rather uneasy; but her fear increased with her astonishment, when, on the door opening, she saw Claudio enter, to whose person and pretensions she was by no means a stranger. He advanced towards her with an easy air, and smiling demeanour, and saluted her respectfully, yet not without a certain air of tenderness and confidence, that spoke a certainty to her heart, that her fears were far from groundless. Claudio, thinking it useless to conceal what he intended so soon to make her understand, at once told her of his love, and pleaded forgiveness for the daring measures he had taken to secure an interview with the object of his adoration.

It would be vain to describe the scene that followed; the protestations on one side; the prayers and reproaches on the other. Suffice it to say, that Claudio, after exhausting all the eloquence of which he was so perfect a master, left his fair captive an opportunity of revolving in her own mind the circumstances of her untoward situation. From the female slave who attended she could gain nothing but praises of

her master's generosity, and every other source of information or escape was denied her.

In this manner the day passed, and the hour of supper arrived. The twilight of a beautiful day was succeeded by as calm and delicious an evening as ever graced the happy climate of Andalusia. The window of the apartment opened on a terrace overlooking a garden, from which the odour of the orange, plum, and jessamine, was wafted on the cool, refreshing air of evening, and the plash of the streaming fountains was heard, as the waters fell into their marble basins with a tinkling, silvery sound. Claudio drew a chair for Dorothea on the terrace, and taking his guitar, sang one of those tender and pathetic sequidillas which never fail to rouse the emotions of the heart. Every thing around reminded Dorothea of the elegance of her former life; and the air she had just heard was one of those to which she had formerly listened, when among the number of the noble and the gay. But never before had she heard it so exquisitely sung—never, even in her father's costly home, had she seen greater elegance and refinement of taste than were conspicuous in the mansion of which she was then a tenant. The whole delight of her former life, her lost family and happy home, rushed back on her memory, and she burst into tears. Claudio did not let the moment pass unimproved: he knew the chord which was awakened in her heart, and, before supper was announced, his tender and endearing consolation had almost reconciled her to his deceit.

The room in which their meal was served was illumined with a splendour which left the light of day little to be regretted; yet the glare of the lamps was exhausted by glasses of a pale rose colour, which, without detracting from the brilliancy, cast a subdued and voluptuous tinge on every object around. The supper consisted of the most delicate viands, and the wines and liquors of the choicest and most costly description; the coronetted plate glittered upon her eyes as gorgeous and costly as in her early days of magnificence; why then shall we blame her, if comparisons unwittingly forced themselves on her imagination, between her present humble lot, and the time when such a display as she now beheld she could herself command? Let us not be too harsh on poor Dorothea, if, as her recollection glanced at the utter hopelessness of her present situation with regard to Claudio,—in a house surrounded by his own people, of whom indeed none knew her predicament besides Sabina and the attendant,—she should contemplate her own feeble means of resistance,— a resistance which, if sufficiently successful to raise an alarm, of which however she saw no probability, could only end in the certain ruin of her reputation. Her husband was reconciled to her absence for two days, after which time she could return without suspicion; in compassion therefore to his feelings, she was inclined to be silent in the affair; and if we add to these reflections the scene around her, the impassioned love of the most handsome and accomplished nobleman in Seville, the feeling still lingering in her heart for the elegancies of nobility and wealth, the early associations of which her short time of probation could not wholly subdue.—why

shall we wonder that Claudio was spared the sin of increasing his already flagrant transgression.

By this time the brilliancy of Claudio's mansion waxed fainter and fainter; the individuals of his household had caroused to their satisfaction, and it was not long before everything seemed to be hushed in repose. But it so happened that their rest this night was destined to be but of short duration, for under no circumstance does the devil ever give a feast without devouring the greater part himself, and in this instance he did not depart from his universal rule.

It is a very common custom with him to construct a sort of tent or pavilion, wherein he invites a number of his particular friends. Here, by means of opportunity, temptation, and specious suggestion, which he is never at a loss to invent, he succeeds in throwing them completely off their guard; and having lulled them into complete security, he suddenly draws aside the covering, and exhibits them to the public gaze in all the deformity of the vicious career into which they have been seduced. Not satisfied with this partial exposure, he takes his drum and trumpet, and raises such a disturbance, that every body, far and near, be they never so little gifted with curiosity, immediately repair to the scene to ascertain the cause of such an outcry.

It just happened thus to those of whom we have related this little history—and yet, who could have foreseen that any disastrous consequences could have terminated a scheme so well laid, and apparently so well secured?—but who ought to feel surprised when we recollect who it was planned the entertainment, and who paid the cost?

During that day, as may be supposed, very little order was kept in Claudio's house. The servants, while the master was so completely entranced, felt they had a right to act as they pleased, and were restrained by no consideration; so that when night came, Claudio's cellars had been so thoroughly searched, that very few were in a condition to assist themselves. The consequence was, the fires were badly extinguished, and some combustible matter lying in the kitchen was kindled by a spark from the chimney, which, extending to some pieces of furniture, shortly spread with uncontrolled and alarming fury, to other parts of the building. The fire continued to gain ground in the inner part of the house, without any one being aware of the danger; for, overcome by the wine they had drunk, they were quite insensible to the peril that awaited them.

The flames had now forced their way through the casements, and it so happened that the Lieutenant of the city, of whom we had heretofore occasion to speak, was making his circuit of the place, and seeing an unusual glare at a distance, instantly rode to the spot, and found Claudio's house in flames. The alarm was instantly given—crowds of the police and neighbours rushed to the spot; no answer being returned to their thundering salutations, the gate was forced, and a confused mob rushed in, some to save the inhabitants, others to assist in extinguishing the fire, and not a few to appropriate to themselves what little the flames would relinquish.

Claudio and Dorothea, who were at

some distance from the household, received the first intimation of their danger by hearing the doors of the antechamber forced open, and the confused sound of voices approaching. Claudio, suspecting the house was beset by thieves, instantly threw a cloak round him, and seizing his rapier, started forth to meet the aggressors; and Dorothea, alarmed beyond measure, hastily threw some garments over her; but before either could reach the door, it was thrown open, and the Lieutenant himself entered, bearing a blazing torch, and followed by a crowd of soldiery.

To paint the horror of Dorothea and the astonishment of the Lieutenant is impossible; surprise and fear prevented her from using any caution in concealing her countenance until it was too late. The Lieutenant's surprise, however, was quickly changed into the most violent anger; to think that his long suit had been treated with contempt and indifference, and that one of such late pretensions should have succeeded as his rival, apparently with her own consent, and doubtless with the knowledge of her husband, was more than he could endure; and without heeding the consequences to himself, in the anticipation of revenge, he ordered them both to prison, that a public exposure might ensue on the morrow.

In vain Claudio threatened the direst retribution—in vain he pleaded his nobility, and protested against the outrage; the Lieutenant was inexorable; and the soldiers, not knowing the person of either, obeyed the command of their officer.

Covered with cloaks to avoid the recognition of the crowd, Claudio and the terrified Dorothea were conducted by the guard through the burning house, and conveyed to prison. The fire was with difficulty extinguished; the Lieutenant retired to his house, not to sleep, but to think of his revenge in the exposure which the morning would not fail to produce. He even endeavoured to contrive some manner of implicating Bonifacio, who he did not doubt had consented to the absence of his wife, for some consideration.

However, leaving the worthy officer to gratify his motive by anticipation, we must return to our friends, whom we left in a pitiable plight on their way to prison. Sabina, who slept in an adjoining apartment to that of her master, seeing how matters went, immediately invented a plan to defeat the intentions of the Lieutenant, who, she was well aware, intended nothing less than the destruction of Dorothea's reputation. It is said, and very justly, that the ready wit of women is more available in critical junctures, than all the wisdom and foresight of the wisest. Without further hesitation, therefore, she provided herself with the remains of a roasted capon, some nice ham, and a flask of wine; then taking a small mattrass and coverlid on her head, and a few reals in her purse, she betook herself to the guard house, where her master and Dorothea were detained. She told the porter that a servant of her master had been sent there by the Lieutenant, for not being sufficiently prompt in supplying the necessary vessels to obtain water to check the fire, and that with his leave she had brought her a bed and supper.

The trifling nature of the fault, and the efficacious nature of a few reals.

quickly opened the door; and Dorothea, who was more dead than alive, quickly exchanged her garments for those of Sabina, whose face being concealed by the mattrass, was not known to the porter. Immediately this was effected, Dorothea called to the functionary, and told him that her friend refused to have any supper, and begged his acceptance of it, for which the man seemed very grateful, and accompanied her to the door with every mark of respect, leaving Sabina in her place with Claudio.

Dorothea, following the instruction of Sabina, flew to the house of one of Claudio's relations, who had been an actor in the scene of the day previous, and relating the circumstance to her, remained there the rest of the night; and early on the following morning, accompanied by her and another female, returned to her husband, saying, that as she did not feel quite well, the Abbess advised her to go home.

Bonifacio was much pleased to find his wife return earlier than he expected, and was profuse in his acknowledgments to the ladies who had done him and his wife so much honour. Meanwhile the Lieutenant, delighting in the prospect before him, dispatched one of his assistants to his friend the mayor, giving him an account of the case, and begging that he would repair to the council chamber as quickly as possible with as many friends as he could collect, in order that the case might be made as public as possible.

He then went over to Bonifacio for the purpose of upbraiding him, and commanding his attendance at the council chamber. Dorothea, who expected some visit of the kind, no sooner heard the voice of the Lieutenant, and speaking of herself in the most opprobrious terms, than she ran down stairs in the morning dress she usually wore, and confronted the gallant officer before he could enter into particulars. Her appearance was like the effect of an apparition on the Lieutenant, who seemed utterly confounded, as though doubting the evidence of his senses. His evident confusion aroused the wrath of Bonifacio, who thinking that what he had said proceeded from an ill feeling, the cause of which he conjectured, and which the appearance of his wife had caused him to be ashamed of—forgetting the respect due to his superior, and only alive to his insulted honour, with the assistance of his men, he thrust the gallant officer with his myrmidons out of doors. He then returned, happy and delighted, to his wife, to whom he repeatedly expressed his pleasure at her returning even earlier than he had expected.

The Wedding

THE other day I saw a wedding. . . . But no! I would rather tell you about a Christmas tree. The wedding was superb. I liked it immensely. But the other incident was still finer. I don't know why it is that the sight of the wedding reminded me of the Christmas tree. This is the way it happened:

Exactly five years ago, on New Year's Eve, I was invited to a children's ball by a man high up in the business world, who had his connections, his circle of acquaintances, and his intrigues. So it seemed as though the children's ball was merely a pretext for the parents to come together and discuss matters of interest to themselves, quite innocently and casually.

I was an outsider, and, as I had no special matters to air, I was able to spend the evening independently of the others. There was another gentleman present who like myself had just stumbled upon this affair of domestic bliss. He was the first to attract my attention. His appearance was not that of a man of birth or high family. He was tall, rather thin, very serious, and well dressed. Apparently he had no heart for the family festivities. The instant he went off into a corner by himself the smile disappeared from his face, and his thick dark brows knitted into a frown. He knew no one except the host and showed every sign of being bored to death, though bravely sustaining the rôle of thorough enjoyment to the end. Later I learned that he was a provincial, had come to the capital on some important, brain-racking business, had brought a letter of recommendation to our host, and our host had taken him under his protection, not at all *con amore*. It was merely out of politeness that he had invited him to the children's ball.

They did not play cards with him, they did not offer him cigars. No one entered into conversation with him. Possibly they recognized the bird by its feathers from a distance. Thus, my gentleman, not knowing what to do with his hands, was compelled to spend the evening stroking his whiskers. His whiskers were really fine, but he stroked them so assiduously that one got the feeling that the whiskers had come into the world first and afterwards the man in order to stroke them.

There was another guest who interested me. But he was of quite a different order. He was a personage. They called him Julian Mastakovich At first glance one could tell he was an honored guest and stood in the same relation to the host as the host to the gentleman of the whiskers. The host and hostess said no end of amiable things to him, were most attentive, wining him, hovering over him, bringing guests up to be introduced, but never leading him to anyone else. I noticed tears glisten in our host's eyes when Julian Mastakovich remarked that he had rarely spent such a pleasant evening. Somehow I began to feel uncomfortable in this personage's presence. So, after amusing myself with the children, five of whom, remarkably well-fed young persons, were our host's, I went into a little sitting-room, entirely unoccupied, and seated myself at the end that was a conservatory and took up almost half the room.

The children were charming. They absolutely refused to resemble their elders, notwithstanding the efforts of mothers and governesses. In a jiffy they had denuded the Christmas tree down to the very last sweet and had already succeeded in breaking half of their playthings before they even found out which belonged to whom.

One of them was a particularly handsome little lad, dark-eyed, curly-headed, who stubbornly persisted in aiming at

me with his wooden gun. But the child that attracted the greatest attention was his sister, a girl of about eleven, lovely as a Cupid. She was quiet and thoughtful, with large, full, dreamy eyes. The children had somehow offended her, and she left them and walked into the same room that I had withdrawn into. There she seated herself with her doll in a corner.

"Her father is an immensely wealthy business man," the guests informed each other in tones of awe. "Three hundred thousand rubles set aside for her dowry already."

As I turned to look at the group from which I heard this news item issuing, my glance met Julian Mastakovich's. He stood listening to the insipid chatter in an attitude of concentrated attention, with his hands behind his back and his head inclined to one side.

All the while I was quite lost in admiration of the shrewdness our host displayed in the dispensing of the gifts. The little maid of the many-rubled dowry received the handsomest doll, and the rest of the gifts were graded in value according to the diminishing scale of the parents' stations in life. The last child, a tiny chap of ten, thin, red-haired, freckled, came into possession of a small book of nature stories without illustrations or even head and tail pieces. He was the governess's child. She was a poor widow, and her little boy, clad in a sorry-looking little nankeen jacket, looked thoroughly crushed and intimidated. He took the book of nature stories and circled slowly about the children's toys. He would have given anything to play with them. But he did not dare to. You could tell he already knew his place.

I like to observe children. It is fascinating to watch the individuality in them struggling for self-assertion. I could see that the other children's things had tremendous charm for the red-haired boy, especially a toy theater, in which he was so anxious to take a part that he resolved to fawn upon the other children. He smiled and began to play with them. His one and only apple he handed over to a puffy urchin whose pockets were already crammed with sweets, and he even carried another youngster pickaback—all simply that he might be allowed to stay with the theater.

But in a few moments an impudent young person fell on him and gave him a pommeling. He did not dare even to cry. The governess came and told him to leave off interfering with the other children's games, and he crept away to the same room the little girl and I were in. She let him sit down beside her, and the two set themselves busily to dressing the expensive doll.

Almost half an hour passed, and I was nearly dozing off, as I sat there in the conservatory half listening to the chatter of the red-haired boy and the dowered beauty, when Julian Mastakovich entered suddenly. He had slipped out of the drawing-room under cover of a noisy scene among the children. From my secluded corner it had not escaped my notice that a few moments before he had been eagerly conversing with the rich girl's father, to whom he had only just been introduced.

He stood still for a while reflecting and mumbling to himself, as if counting something on his fingers.

"Three hundred — three hundred — eleven — twelve — thirteen — sixteen —

in five years! Let's say four percent —five times twelve—sixty, and on these sixty——. Let us assume that in five years it will amount to—well, four hundred. Hm—hm! But the shrewd old fox isn't likely to be satisfied with four percent. He gets eight or even ten, perhaps. Let's suppose five hundred, five hundred thousand, at least, that's sure. Anything above that for pocket money—hm——"

He blew his nose and was about to leave the room when he spied the girl and stood still. I, behind the plants, escaped his notice. He seemed to me to be quivering with excitement. It must have been his calculations that upset him so. He rubbed his hands and danced from place to place, and kept getting more and more excited. Finally, however, he conquered his emotions and came to a standstill. He cast a determined look at the future bride and wanted to move toward her, but glanced about first. Then, as if with a guilty conscience, he stepped over to the child on tip-toe, smiling, and bent down and kissed her head.

His coming was so unexpected that she uttered a shriek of alarm.

"What are you doing here, dear child?" he whispered, looking around and pinching her cheek.

"We're playing."

"What, with him?" said Julian Mastakovich with a look askance at the governess's child. "You should go into the drawing-room, my lad," he said to him.

The boy remained silent and looked up at the man with wide-open eyes. Julian Mastakovich glanced round again cautiously and bent down over the girl.

"What have you got, a doll, my dear?"

"Yes, sir." The child quailed a little, and her brow wrinkled.

"A doll? And do you know, my dear, what dolls are made of?"

"No, sir," she said weakly, and lowered her head.

"Out of rags, my dear. You, boy you go back to the drawing-room, to the children," said Julian Mastakovich, looking at the boy sternly.

The two children frowned. They caught hold of each other and would not part.

"And do you know why they gave you the doll?" asked Julian Mastakovich, dropping his voice lower and lower.

"No."

"Because you were a good, very good little girl the whole week."

Saying which, Julian Mastakovich was seized with a paroxysm of agitation. He looked round and said in a tone faint, almost inaudible with excitement and impatience:

"If I come to visit your parents will you love me, my dear?"

He tried to kiss the sweet little creature, but the red-haired boy saw that she was on the verge of tears, and he caught her hand and sobbed out loud in sympathy. That enraged the man.

"Go away! Go away! Go back to the other room, to your playmates."

"I don't want him to. I don't want him to! You go away!" cried the girl. "Let him alone! Let him alone!" She was almost weeping.

There was a sound of footsteps in the doorway. Julian Mastakovich started and straightened up his respectable body. The red-haired boy was

even more alarmed. He let go the girl's hand, sidled along the wall, and escaped through the drawing room into the dining room.

Not to attract attention, Julian Mastakovich also made for the dining room. He was red as a lobster. The sight of himself in a mirror seemed to embarrass him. Presumably he was annoyed at his own ardor and impatience. Without due respect to his importance and dignity, his calculations had lured and pricked him to the greedy eagerness of a boy, who makes straight for his object—though this was not as yet an object: it only would be so in five years' time. I followed the worthy man into the dining room, where I witnessed a remarkable play.

Julian Mastakovich, all flushed with vexation, venom in his look, began to threaten the red-haired boy. The red-haired boy retreated farther and farther until there was no place left for him to retreat to, and he did not know where to turn in his fright.

"Get out of here! What are you doing here? Get out, I say, you good-for-nothing! Stealing fruit, are you? Oh, so, stealing fruit! Get out, you freckle face, go to your likes!"

The frightened child as a last desperate resort, crawled quickly under the table. His persecutor, completely infuriated, pulled out his large linen handkerchief and used it as a lash to drive the boy out of his position.

Here I must remark that Julian Mastakovich was a somewhat corpulent man, heavy, well-fed, puffy-cheeked, with a paunch and ankles as round as nuts. He perspired and puffed and panted. So strong was his dislike (or was it jealousy?) of the child that he actually began to carry on like a madman.

I laughed heartily. Julian Mastakovich turned. He was utterly confused and for a moment, apparently, quite oblivious of his immense importance. At that moment our host appeared in the doorway opposite. The boy crawled out from under the table and wiped his knees and elbows. Julian Mastakovich hastened to carry his handkerchief, which he had been dangling by the corner, to his nose. Our host looked at the three of us rather suspiciously. But, like a man who knows the world and can readily adjust himself, he seized upon the opportunity to lay hold of his very valuable guest and get what he wanted out of him.

"Here's the boy I was talking to you about," he said, indicating the red-haired child. "I took the liberty of presuming on your goodness in his behalf."

"Oh," replied Julian Mastakovich, still not quite master of himself.

"He's my governess's son," our host continued in a beseeching tone. "She's a poor creature, the widow of an honest official. That's why, if it were possible for you——"

"Impossible, impossible!" Julian Mastakovich cried hastily. "You must excuse me, Philip Alexeyevich, I really cannot. I've made inquiries. There are no vacancies, and there is a waiting list of ten who have a greater right—I'm sorry."

"Too bad," said our host. "He's a quiet, unobtrusive child."

"A very naughty little rascal, I should say," said Julian Mastakovich wryly.

"Go away, boy. Why are you here still? Be off with you to the other children."

Unable to control himself, he gave me a sidelong glance. Nor could I control myself. I laughed straight in his face. He turned away and asked our host, in tones quite audible to me, who that odd young fellow was. They whispered to each other and left the room, disregarding me.

I shook with laughter. Then I, too, went to the drawing-room. There the great man, already surrounded by the fathers and mothers and the host and hostess, had begun to talk eagerly with a lady to whom he had just been introduced. The lady held the rich little girl's hand. Julian Mastakovich went into fulsome praise of her. He waxed ecstatic over the dear child's beauty, her talents, her grace, her excellent breeding, plainly laying himself out to flatter the mother, who listened scarcely able to restrain tears of joy while the father showed his delight by a gratified smile.

The joy was contagious. Everybody shared in it. Even the children were obliged to stop playing so as not to disturb the conversation. The atmosphere was surcharged with awe. I heard the mother of the important little girl, touched to her profoundest depths, ask Julian Mastakovich in the choicest language of courtesy, whether he would honor them by coming to see them. I heard Julian Mastakovich accept the invitation with unfeigned enthusiasm. Then the guests scattered decorously to different parts of the room, and I heard them, with veneration in their tones, extol the business man, the business man's wife, the business man's daughter, and, especially, Julian Mastakovich.

"Is he married?" I asked out loud of an acquaintance of mine standing beside Julian Mastakovich.

Julian Mastakovich gave me a venomous look.

"No," answered my acquaintance, profoundly shocked by my intentional —indiscretion.

. . . . . .

Not long ago I passed the Church of ———. I was struck by the concourse of people gathered there to witness a wedding. It was a dreary day. A drizzling rain was beginning to come down. I made my way through the throng into the church. The bridegroom was a round, well-fed, pot-bellied little man, very much dressed up. He ran and fussed about and gave orders and arranged things. Finally word was passed that the bride was coming. I pushed through the crowd, and I beheld a marvelous beauty whose first spring was scarcely commencing. But the beauty was pale and sad. She looked distracted. It seemed to me even that her eyes were red from recent weeping. The classic severity of every line of her face imparted a peculiar significance and solemnity to her beauty. But through that severity and solemnity, through the sadness, shone the innocence of a child. There was something inexpressibly naïve, unsettled and young in her features, which, without words, seemed to plead for mercy.

They said she was just sixteen years old. I looked at the bridegroom carefully. Suddenly I recognized Julian Mastakovich, whom I had not seen again all those five years. Then I

looked at the bride again.—Good God! I made my way, as quickly as I could, out of the church. I heard gossiping in the crowd about the bride's wealth—about her dowry of five hundred thousand rubles—so and so much for pocket money.

"Then his calculations were correct," I thought, as I pressed out into the street.

Cheated

THE sails hung motionless, clinging to the masts; the sea was as smooth as glass; the heat was stifling and the calm discouraging.

During a sea voyage the resources of amusement open to passengers on board ship are soon exhausted. Anyone who has spent four months together in a wooden house of one hundred and twenty feet in length knows this fact, alas! only too well. When you see the first lieutenant coming toward you you know that he will first begin talking about Rio de Janeiro, from whence he came; then of the famous Essling Bridge, which he saw made by the Marine Guards to which he belonged. After the fifteenth day you know exactly the expressions he is fond of, even the punctuation of his sentences, and the different intonations of his voice. When did he ever miss dwelling sadly on the word "emperor" when he pronounced it for the first time in his recital? . . . He invariably added, "If you had only seen him then! ! !" (three exclamation marks to denote his admiration). And the incident of the trumpeter's horse, and the ball that rebounded and carried away a cartridge-box which contained seven thousand five hundred francs in money and jewellery, etc., etc.! The second lieutenant is a great politician; he makes critical remarks every day on the last number of the *Constitutionnel* which he brought from Brest, or, if he leaves the sublime heights of politics to descend to literature, he sets you to rights on the last vaudeville he saw played. Good Lord! The Commissioner of the Navy has a very interesting story to relate. How he enchanted us the first time he told us of his escape from the pontoon at Cadiz, but, by the twentieth repetition, upon my word, it is barely endurable! . . .

And the ensigns and the midshipmen! . . . The recollection of their conversation makes my hair stand on end. Generally speaking, the captain is the least tedious person on board. In his position of despotic commander he is in a state of secret hostility against the whole staff; he annoys and oppresses at times, but there is a certain amount of pleasure to be gained by inveighing against him. If he is furiously angry with some of his subordinates, his superior tone is a pleasure to listen to, which is some slight consolation.

On board the vessel on which I was sailing the officers were the best fellows going, all good company, liking each other as brothers, but bored of each other all the same. The captain was the gentlest of men, and, what is very rare, was nothing of a busybody. He was always unwilling to exercise his au-

thoritative power. But, in spite of all, the voyage seemed terribly long, especially when the calm set in which overtook us a few days only before we made land! . . .

One day, after dinner, which want of employment had made us spin out as long as was humanly possible, we were all assembled on the bridge, watching the monotonous but ever majestic spectacle of a sunset over the sea. Some were smoking, others were re-reading for the twentieth time one of the thirty volumes which comprised our wretched library; all were yawning till the tears ran down their cheeks. One ensign, who was sitting by me, was amusing himself, with the gravity worthy of a serious occupation, by letting the poniard, worn ordinarily by naval officers in undress, fall, point downward, on the planks of the deck. It was as amusing as anything else on board, and required skill to throw the point so that it should stick in the wood quite perpendicularly. I wanted to follow the ensign's example, and not having a poniard with me, I tried to borrow the captain's, but he refused it me. He was singularly attached to that weapon, and it would have vexed him to see it put to such a futile use. It had formerly belonged to a brave officer who had been mortally wounded in the last war. I guessed a story would be forthcoming, nor was I mistaken. The captain began before he was asked for it, but the officers, who stood round us, and who knew the misfortunes of Lieutenant Roger by heart, soon beat a circumspect retreat. Here is the captain's story almost in his own words:

Roger was three years older than I when I first knew him; he was a lieutenant and I was an ensign. He was quite one of the best officers on our staff; he was, moreover, good-natured, talented, quick and well educated; in a word, he was a fascinating young fellow. But unfortunately he was rather proud and sensitive; this arose, I think, from the fact of his being an illegitimate child, and his fear that his birth might make people look down upon him; but, to tell the truth, the greatest of all his faults was a passionate and ever-present desire to take the lead wherever he was. His father, whom he had never seen, made him an allowance which would have been more than enough for his needs, had he not been the soul of generosity. All that he had was at the service of his friends. When he drew his quarter's pay, and met a friend with a sad and anxious face, he would say—

"Why, mate, what's the matter? You look as though you had difficulty in making your pockets jingle when you slap them; come, here is my purse, take what you want, and have dinner with me."

A very pretty young actress came to Brest named Gabrielle, and she quickly made conquest among the naval and army officers. She was not a perfect beauty, but she had a good figure, fine eyes, a small foot and a pleasant, saucy manner; these things are all very delightful when one is voyaging between the latitudes of twenty and twenty-five years of age. She was, in addition, the most capricious of her sex, and her style of playing did not belie this reputation. Sometimes she played enchantingly, and one would have called her a *comédienne* of the highest order; on the following day she would be cold and

lifeless in the very same piece; she would deliver her part as a child recites its catechism. But more than all else it was the story told of her which I am about to relate that interested our young men. It seems she had been kept in sumptuous style by a Parisian senator, who, it was said, committed all sorts of follies for her sake. One day this man put his hat on in her house; she begged him to take it off, and even complained that he showed a want of respect toward her. The senator burst out laughing, shrugged his shoulders and said, as he elaborately settled himself in his chair, "The least I can do is to make myself at home in the house of a girl whom I keep."

Gabrielle's white hand smacked his face as soundly as though she had a navvy's hand, and she also paid him back for his words by throwing his hat to the other end of the room. From that moment there was a complete rupture between them. Bankers and generals made considerable offers to the lady, but she refused them all and became an actress, so that she could, as she expressed it, live independently.

When Roger saw her and learnt her history, he decided that she was—must be his, and with the somewhat uncouth freedom with which we sailors are credited, he took the following methods to show her how much he was affected by her charms. He bought the rarest and loveliest flowers to be found in Brest, had them made into a bouquet which he tied with a beautiful rose-coloured ribbon, and in the knot he carefully placed a roll of twenty-five napoleons, all he possessed for the time being. I remember accompanying him behind the scenes during an interval between the acts. He paid Gabrielle a brief compliment upon the grace with which she wore her costume, offered her the bouquet and asked leave to call upon her. He managed to get through all this in about three words.

Whilst Gabrielle only saw the flowers and the handsome youth who offered them to her, she smiled upon him, accompanying her smile with a most gracious bow; but when she held the bouquet between her hands and felt the weight of the gold, her face changed more rapidly than the surface of the sea when roused by a tropical hurricane; and certainly it could scarcely have looked more evil, for she hurled the bouquet and the napoleons with all her strength at my poor friend's head, so that he carried the marks of it on his face for more than a week after. The manager's bell rang and Gabrielle went on and played wildly.

Covered with confusion, Roger picked up his bouquet and packet of gold, went to a café, offered the bouquet (but not the money) to the girl at the desk, and tried to forget his cruel mistress in a glass of punch. But he did not succeed, and, in spite of his vexation at not being able to show himself without a black eye, he fell madly in love with the enraged Gabrielle. He wrote her twenty letters a day, and such letters!—abject, tender, full of obsequious phrases that might have been addressed to a princess. The first were returned to him unopened, and the rest received no answer. Roger, however, kept up hope, until he discovered that the theatre orange-seller wrapped up his oranges in Roger's love-letters, which Gabrielle, with the very refinement of maliciousness, had given him. This was a terrible blow to our

friend's pride; but his passion did not die out. He talked of asking the actress to marry him, and threatened to blow his brains out when we told him that the Minister for Marine Affairs would never give his consent.

While all this was going on the officers of a regiment of the line in the garrison at Brest wished to make Gabrielle repeat a vaudeville couplet, and she refused the encore out of pure caprice. The officers and the actress both remained so obstinate that it came to the former hooting until the curtain had to be dropped and the latter left the stage. You know what the pit of a garrison town is like. The officers plotted together to hiss her without intermission the next day and for a few days after, and not allow her to play a single part unless she made humble amends for her bad behaviour. Roger had taken no part in these proceedings; but he heard of the scandal which put the whole theatre in an uproar that very night, and also the plans for revenge which were being hatched for the morrow. He immediately made up his mind what he would do.

When Gabrielle made her appearance the next night an ear-splitting noise of hooting and cat-calls rose from the officers' seats. Roger, who had purposely placed himself near the roisterers, got up and haranged the noisiest in such scathing language that the whole of their fury was soon turned on himself. He then drew his notebrook from his pocket, and, with the utmost *sang-froid,* wrote down the names cried out to him from all sides; he would have arranged to fight with the whole regiment if a great many naval officers had not come up, out of loyalty to their order, and taken part against his adversaries. The hubbub was something frightful.

The whole garrison was confined for several days, but when we regained liberty there was a terrible score to settle. There were threescore of us at the rendezvous. Roger, alone, fought three officers in succession; he killed one, and badly wounded the other two without receiving a scratch. I, as luck would have it, came off less fortunately; a cursed lieutenant, who had been a fencing master, gave me a neat thrust through the chest which nearly finished me. The duel, or rather battle, was a fine sight, I can tell you. The naval officers had gained the victory, and the regiment was obliged to leave Brest.

You may guess that our superior officers did not overlook the author of the quarrel. They placed a guard outside his door for a fortnight.

When his term of arrest was over I came out of hospital and went to see him. Judge my surprise when I entered his room and found him sitting at breakfast *tête-à-tête* with Gabrielle. They seemed to have been on friendly terms for some time, and already called each other thee and thou, and drank out of the same glass. Roger introduced me to his mistress as his dearest friend, and told her I had been wounded in the slight skirmish on her behalf. This charming young girl then condescended to kiss me, for all her sympathies were with fighters.

They spent three months together in perfect happiness, and never left each other for a moment. Gabrielle seemed to love him to distraction, and Roger declared that he had never known love before he met Gabrielle.

One day a Dutch frigate came into harbour. The officers gave us a dinner, and we drank deeply of all sorts of wines; but when the cloth was removed, we did not know what to do, for these gentlemen spoke very bad French. We began to play. The Dutchmen seemed to have plenty of money; and their first lieutenant especially offered to play such high stakes that none of us cared to take a hand with him. But Roger, who did not play as a rule, felt it incumbent upon him to uphold the honour of his country in the matter. So he played for the stakes that the Dutch lieutenant fixed. At first he gained, then he lost, and after several ups and downs of gaining and losing they stopped without anything having been done on either side. We returned this dinner, and invited the Dutch officers. Again we played, and Roger and the lieutenant set to work afresh. In short, they played for several days, meeting either in cafés or on board ship; they tried all kinds of games, backgammon more than any, always increasing their wagers until they came to the point of playing for twenty-five napoleons each game. It was an enormous sum for poverty-stricken officers like us—more than two months' pay! At the week's end Roger had lost every penny he possessed, and more than three or four thousand francs which he had borrowed on all sides.

You will gather that Roger and Gabrielle had ended by sharing household and purse in common, that is to say that Roger, who had just received a large payment on account of his allowance, contributed ten or twenty times more than the actress. He always considered that this sum, large as was his share in it, belonged chiefly to his mistress, and he had only kept back for his own expenses about fifty napoleons. He was, however, obliged to draw from this reserve to go on playing, and Gabrielle did not make the slightest objection.

The housekeeping money went the same way as his pocket-money. Very soon Roger was reduced to playing his last twenty-five napoleons. The game was long and hotly contested, and it was horrible to see the intense efforts Roger made to gain it. The moment came when Roger, who held the dice-box, had only one more chance left to win; I think he wanted to get six, four. The night was far advanced, and an officer who had been looking at their play had fallen asleep in an arm-chair. The Dutchman was tired out and drowsy; moreover, he had drunk too much punch. Roger alone was wide awake and a prey to the depths of despair. He trembled as he threw the dice. He threw them so roughly upon the board that the shock knocked a candle over on to the floor. The Dutchman turned his head first toward the candle, which had covered his new trousers with wax; then he looked at the dice. They showed six and four. Roger, who was as pale as death, received his twenty-five napoleons, and they went on playing. Chance again favoured my unlucky friend, who, however, made blunder upon blunder, and secured points as though he wanted to lose. The Dutch lieutenant lost his head, and doubled and quadrupled his stakes; he lost every time. I can see him now—a tall, fair man of a phlegmatic nature, whose face seemed made of wax. At last he got up, after he lost forty thousand francs.

and paid it without his features betraying the least trace of emotion.

"We will not take into account what we have played for to-night," said Roger. "You were more than half asleep. I do not want your money."

"You are joking," replied the phlegmatic Dutchman; "I played well, but the dice were against me. I am quite capable of winning off you always. Good evening!"

And he went out.

We learnt next day that, made desperate by his losses, he had blown out his brains in his room, after drinking a bowl of punch.

The forty thousand francs that Roger had won from him were spread out on the table, and Gabrielle gazed at them with a smile of satisfaction.

"See how rich we are!" she said. "What shall we do with all this money?"

Roger did not answer her; he seemed stunned since the Dutchman's death.

"We can do a thousand delicious things," she went on. "Money gained so easily ought to be spent as lightly. Let us set up a carriage, and snap our fingers at the Maritime Prefect and his wife. I want some diamonds and some Cashmere shawls. Ask for a holiday, and let us go to Paris; we could never spend so much money here!"

She stopped to look at Roger, whose eyes were fixed on the ceiling; his head was leant on his hand, and he had not heard a word; he seemed to be a prey to the most miserable thoughts.

"What on earth's wrong with you, Roger?" she cried, leaning her hand on his shoulder. "You will make me pull faces at you presently. I can not get a word out of you."

"I am very unhappy," he said at length, with a smothered sigh.

"Unhappy! Why, I do believe you regret having pinked that big *mynheer*."

He raised his head and looked at her with haggard eyes.

"What does it matter?" she went on. "Why mind if he did take the thing tragically and blew out his few brains? I don't pity losing players; and his money is better in our hands than in his. He would have wasted it in drinking and smoking, whilst we will do a thousand lovely things with it, each one nicer than the last."

Roger walked about the room with his head bent on his breast, his eyes half closed and filled with tears. "You would have been sorry for him if you had seen him."

"Don't you know," said Gabrielle to him, "that people who do not know how romantically sensitive you are might imagine you had been cheating?"

"And if it were the truth?" he cried in hollow tones, stopping before her.

"Bah!" she answered, smiling; "you are not clever enough to cheat at play."

"Yes, I cheated, Gabrielle; I cheated —wretch that I am!"

She understood from his agitation of mind that he spoke but too truly. She sat down on a couch and remained speechless for some time.

"I would much rather you had killed ten men than cheated at play," she said at length in a very troubled voice.

There was a deathlike silence for half an hour. They both sat on the same sofa, and never looked at each other once. Roger got up first and wished her good night in a calm voice.

"Good night," she replied in cold and hard tones.

Roger has since told me that he would have killed himself that very day if he had not been afraid that his comrades would have guessed the reason for his suicide. He did not wish his memory to be disgraced.

Gabrielle was as gay as usual next day. She seemed, already, to have forgotten the confidences of the previous evening. But Roger became gloomy, capricious and morose. He avoided his friends, and scarcely left his rooms, often passing a whole day without saying a word to his mistress. I attributed his melancholy to an honourable, but excessive sensitiveness, and tried several times to console him; but he put me at a distance by affecting a supreme indifference toward his unhappy partner. One day he even inveighed against the Dutch nation in violent terms, and tried to make me believe that there was not a single honourable man in Holland. All the same, he tried secretly to find out the Dutch lieutenant's relatives, but no one could give him any information about them.

Six weeks after that unlucky game of backgammon Roger found a note in Gabrielle's rooms, written by an admirer who thanked her for the kind feeling she had shown him. Gabrielle was the very personification of untidiness, and the note in question had been left by her on her mantel-piece. I do not know whether she was unfaithful to Roger or not, but he believed her to be so, and his anger was frightful. His love and a remnant of pride were the only feelings which still attached him to life, and the strongest of these sentiments was thus suddenly destroyed. He overwhelmed the proud actress with insults; and was so violent that I do not know how he refrained from striking her.

"No doubt," he said to her, "this puppy gave you lots of money. It is the only thing you love. You would give yourself to the dirtiest of our sailors if he had anything to pay you with."

"Why not?" retorted the actress icily. "Yes, I would take payment from a sailor, but *I should not have stolen it!*"

Roger uttered a cry of rage. He tremblingly drew his sword, and for one second looked at Gabrielle with the eyes of a madman; then he collected himself with a tremendous effort, threw the weapon at her feet, and rushed from the room to prevent himself yielding to the temptation which beset him.

That same evening I passed his lodging at a late hour, and, seeing his light burning, I went in to borrow a book. I found him busy, writing. He did not disturb himself, and scarcely seemed to notice my presence in his room. I sat down by his desk and studied his features; they were so much altered that anyone else but I would hardly have recognized him. All at once I noticed a letter already sealed on his desk, addressed to myself. I immediately opened it. In it Roger announced to me his intention to put an end to himself, and gave me various instructions to carry out. While I read this, he went on writing the whole time without noticing me. He was bidding farewell to Gabrielle. You can judge of my astonishment, and of what I felt bound to say to him. I was thunder-struck by his decision.

"What! you want to kill yourself when you are so happy?"

"My friend," he said, as he hid his

letter, "you know nothing about it; you do not know me; I am a rascal; I am so guilty that a prostitute has power to insult me; and I am so aware of my baseness that I have no power to strike her."

He then related the story of the game of backgammon, and all that you already know. As I listened I was as moved as he was. I did not know what to say to him; with tears in my eyes I pressed his hands, but I could not speak. Then the idea came to me to try and show him that he need not reproach himself with having intentionally caused the ruin of the Dutchman, and that, after all, he had only made him lose, by his . . . cheating . . . twenty-five napoleons.

"Then," he cried, with bitter irony, "I am a petty thief and not a great one. I, who was so ambitious, to be nothing but a scurvy little scoundrel!"

He shrieked with laughter.

I burst into tears.

Suddenly the door opened, and Gabrielle rushed into his arms.

"Forgive me!" she cried, strangling him almost in her passion; "forgive me! I know it now; I love only you; and I love you better now than if you had not done what you blame yourself for. If you like, I will steal; I have stolen before now. . . Yes, I have stolen; I took a gold watch. . . . What worse could one do?"

Roger shook his head increduously, but his face seemed to brighten.

"No, my poor child," he said, gently repulsing her. "I must kill myself; there is no other course for me. I suffer so greatly that I can not bear my grief."

"Very well, then, if you intend to die, Roger, I shall die with you. What is life to me without you? I have plenty of courage; I have fired pistols; I shall kill myself like anyone else. Besides, I have played at tragedy and am used to it." At first there were tears in her eyes, but this last idea amused her, and even Roger could not help smiling with her. "You are laughing, my soldier-boy," she cried, clapping her hands and hugging him; "you will not kill yourself."

All the time she embraced him she was first crying, then laughing, then swearing like a sailor; for she was not, like many women, afraid of a coarse word.

In the meantime I possessed myself of Roger's pistols and poniard; then I turned to him and said—

"My dear Roger, you have a mistress and a friend who love you. Believe me, there can still be happiness for you in this life." I embraced him and went out, leaving him alone with Gabrielle.

I do not believe we should have succeeded in doing more than delaying his fatal design if he had not received an order from the Admiralty to set out as first lieutenant on board a frigate bound for a cruise in the Indian seas—if it could first cross the lines of the English fleet, which blockaded the port. It was a dangerous venture. I put it to him that it would be much better to die nobly by an English bullet than to put an inglorious end to his life himself, without rendering any service to his country. So he promised to live. He distributed half the forty thousand francs to maimed sailors or the widows and orphans of seamen; the rest he gave to Gabrielle, who at first vowed to him only to use the money for charitable

purposes. She fully meant to keep her word, poor girl! but enthusiasm with her was short-lived. I have heard since that she gave some thousands of francs to the poor, but she spent the remainder on finery.

Roger and I boarded the fine frigate *La Galatée;* our men were brave, experienced, and well-drilled, but our commander was an idiot, who thought himself a Jean Bart because he could swear better than an army captain, because he murdered French, and because he had never studied the theory of his profession, the practice of which he understood only very indifferently. However, fate favoured us at the outset. We got well out of the roadstead—thanks to a gust of wind which compelled the blockading fleet to give us a wide berth—and we began our cruise by burning an English sloop and an East Indiaman off the coast of Portugal.

We were slowly sailing toward the Indian seas, hampered by contrary winds and our captain's bad handling of the ship, whose stupidity increased the danger of our cruise. Sometimes we were chased by superior forces, sometimes pursued by merchant vessels; we did not pass a single day without some fresh adventure. But neither the risky life he led nor the labours caused him by the irksome ship-duties devolving upon him could distract Roger from the sad thoughts which unceasingly haunted him. He who was once considered the most brilliant and active officer in our port now found it almost a burden to fulfil simply his duty. As soon as he was off duty he would shut himself in his cabin without either books or papers, and the unhappy man passed whole hours lying in his cot, for he could not sleep.

One day, noticing his depression, I ventured to say to him—

"Good gracious, my boy, you grieve over nothing! Granted you filched twenty-five napoleons from a big Dutchman, you show as much remorse as though you had taken more than a million. Now, tell me, when you loved the wife of the Prefect of . . . did you mind at all? Nevertheless, she was worth more than twenty-five napoleons."

He turned over on his mattress without a word.

"After all," I continued, "your crime, since you persist in calling it so, had an honourable motive and arose from a lofty mind."

He turned his head and looked at me furiously.

"Yes, for if you had lost what would have become of Gabrielle? She—poor girl!—would have sold her last garment for you. . . . If you had lost she would have been reduced to misery. . . . It was for her, out of love for her, you cheated. There are people who die for love . . . will kill themselves for it. . . . You, my dear Roger, did more. For a man of our order it takes more courage to . . . steal, to put it baldly, than to commit suicide."

("Now, perhaps," the captain interrupted his story to say, "I appear ridiculous to you. I assure you that my friendship for Roger endowed me with a timely eloquence that I am not equal to nowadays; and, devil take it, in saying what I did I spoke in good earnest, and I believed all I said. Ah, I was young then!")

Roger did not make any answer for

a long time; then he held out his hand to me.

"My friend," he said, making a great effort over himself, "you think too well of me. I am a cowardly wretch. When I cheated the Dutchman my only thought was to win the twenty-five napoleons, that was all. I never thought of Gabrielle, and that is why I despise myself. . . . I, to hold my honour in less esteem than twenty-five napoleons! . . . What baseness! Yes, I could be happy if I could tell myself I stole to keep Gabrielle from wretchedness. . . . No! . . . no! I did not think of her. . . . I was not in love at that moment . . . I was a player. . . . I was a thief . . . I stole money to possess it myself, . . . and the deed has so degraded me, and debased me, that I now have no more courage left nor love. . . . I can see it; I do not think any longer of Gabrielle. . . . I am a broken-down man."

He was so wretched, that if he had asked me to hand him his pistols to kill himself I believe I should have given them to him.

One Friday, that day of ill omen, we discovered that a big English frigate, the *Alcestis*, was chasing us. She carried fifty-eight guns, and we but thirty-eight. We put on all sail to escape from her, but her pace was faster than ours, and she gained on us every minute. It was very evident that before night we should be obliged to engage in an unequal battle. Our captain called Roger to his cabin, where they consulted together for more than a quarter of an hour. Roger came up on the deck again, took me by the arm, and drew me aside.

"In two hours' time," he said, "we shall be engaged. That rash man who struts the quarter-deck has lost his wits. He has two courses to choose from: the first, and the most honourable, would be to let the enemy come up to us, then to board the ship determinedly with a hundred or so of our best men; the other course, which is not bad, but rather cowardly, is to lighten ourselves by throwing some of our guns overboard. Then we could make for the near coast of Africa, which we shall soon find to larboard. The English captain would soon be obliged to give up the chase, for fear of grounding; but our . . . captain is neither coward nor hero. He will let himself be destroyed by gunshots a good distance off, and after some hours' fight he will honourably lower his flag. So much the worse for you. The Portsmouth pontoons will be your fate. I have no desire to see them."

"Possibly," I said, "our first shots will damage the enemy sufficiently to compel her to abandon the chase."

"Listen, I do not mean to be taken prisoner; I shall kill myself. It is time I ended it all. If by ill luck I am only wounded, give me your word of honour that you will throw me overboard. It is the proper death-bed for a good sailor."

"What nonsense!" I exclaimed. "What a charge to make me undertake!"

"You will be fulfilling the duty of a true friend. You know I shall have to die. I have only consented not to take my own life in the hope of being killed; you must remember that. Come, promise me this; if you refuse, I shall go and ask this service from the boatswain's mate, who will not refuse me."

After reflecting for some time, I said to him—

"I give you my word to do what you wish, provided that you are mortally wounded, with no hope of recovery. In that case I consent to spare you further suffering."

"I shall be mortally wounded or I shall be killed outright."

He held out his hand to me, and I shook it firmly. After that he was calmer, and even a kind of martial cheerfulness shone in his face. Toward three o'clock in the afternoon the enemy's guns began to play in our rigging. We then clewed up some of our sails, crossed the bows of the *Alcestis,* and started a rattling fire, which the English returned vigorously. After about an hour's fight our captain, who did nothing methodically, wanted to try to board the enemy; but we had already many dead and wounded, and the remainder of our crew had lost heart. Our rigging, besides, had suffered severely, and our masts were badly damaged. Just as we were taking in sail, to approach the English vessel, our large mast, which had nothing to stay it, fell with a horrible noise. The *Alcestis* took advantage of the confusion into which this accident threw us. She came broadside up to our stern and opened fire upon us within half a pistol range of us; she riddled shot through our unfortunate frigate fore and aft, and we were only in a position to point two small guns at her. At that moment I was standing near Roger, who was busy trying to cut the shrouds which still held the fallen mast. I felt my arm pressed forcibly; I turned round and saw him laid flat on the deck covered with blood. He had received a charge of grapeshot in the stomach.

"What can we do, lieutenant?" cried the captain, running up.

"Nail our flag to this piece of mast and sink the ship."

The captain left him at that, for he did not in the least relish the advice.

"Come," said Roger, "remember your promise."

"It is nothing," I said; "you will get over it."

"Throw me overboard!" he cried, and he swore fearfully and seized me by my coat tails; "you see well enough that I cannot recover. Throw me into the sea; I do not want to see our flag taken."

Two sailors came up to carry him below.

"To your guns, you knaves!" he cried with all his strength: "use grape-shot, and aim on the deck. And as for you, if you fail to keep your word I will curse you and think of you as the most cowardly and vile of men!"

His wound was certainly mortal. I saw the captain call a midshipman and give him the order to lower the flag.

"Give me a shake of the hand," I said to Roger. And at that moment our flag was lowered. . . .

"Captain, there is a whale to larboard!" interrupted an ensign, running to us.

"A whale?" cried the captain joyfully and leaving his story unfinished. "Quick! launch the longboat and the yawl, too! All longboats into the water! Bring the harpoons and ropes!" . . .

I never knew how poor Lieutenant Roger died.

Penalty of the Siren

LONG, long ago, a siren lived all alone upon a rocky little island far out in the Southern Ocean. She may have been the youngest and most beautiful of the original three sirens, driven by her sisters' jealousy, or her own weariness of their society, to seek this distant home; or she may have lived there in solitude from the beginning.

But she was not unhappy; all she cared about was the admiration and worship of mortal men, and these were hers whenever she wished, for she had only to sing, and her exquisite voice would float away over the waters, until it reached some passing vessel, and then every one that heard was seized instantly with the irresistible longing to hasten to her isle and throw himself adoringly at her feet.

One day as she sat upon a low headland looking earnestly out over the sparkling blue-green water before her, and hoping to discover the peak of some far-off sail on the hazy sea-line she was startled by a sound she had never heard before—the grating of a boat's keel on the pebbles in the little creek at her side.

She had been too much absorbed in watching for distant ships to notice that a small bark had been gliding round the the other side of her island, but now, as she glanced round, she saw that the stranger who had guided it was already jumping ashore and securing his boat.

Evidently she had not attracted him there, for she had been too indolent to sing of late, and he did not seem ever to have seen her, or to have landed from any other motive than curiosity.

He was quite young, gallant-looking, and sunburnt, with brown hair curling over his forehead, an open face and honest gray eyes. And as she looked at him, the fancy came to her that she would like to question him and hear his voice; she would find out, if she could, what manner of beings these mortals were over whom she possessed so strange a power.

Never before had such a thought entered her mind, notwithstanding that she had seen many mortals of every age and rank, from captain to the lowest galley slave; but then she had only seen them under the influence of her magical voice, when they were struck dumb and motionless, after which—except as proofs of her power—they did not interest her.

But this stranger was still free—so long as she did not choose to enslave him; and for some reason she did not choose to do so just yet.

As he turned toward her, she beckoned to him imperiously, and he saw the slender graceful figure above for the first time—the fairest maiden his eyes had ever beheld, with an unearthly beauty in her wonderful dark blue eyes, and hair of the sunniest gold—he stood gazing at her in motionless uncertainty, for he thought he must be cheated by a vision.

He came nearer, and, obeying a careless motion of her hand, threw himself down on a broad shelf of rock a little below the spot where she was seated; still he did not dare to speak lest the vision should pass away.

She looked at him for some time with

an innocent, almost childish, curiosity shining under her long lashes. At last she gave a low little laugh: "Are you *afraid* of me?" she asked; why don't you speak? but perhaps," she added to herself, "mortals *cannot* speak."

"I was silent," he said, "lest by speaking I should anger you—for surely you must be some goddess or sea-nymph?"

"Ah, you *can* speak!" she cried. "No, I am no goddess or nymph, and you will not anger me—if only you will tell me many things I want to know!"

And she began to ask him all the questions she could think of: first about the great world in which men lived, and then about himself, for she was very curious, in a charmingly wilful and capricious fashion of her own.

He answered frankly and simply, but it seemed as if some influence were upon him which kept him from being dazzled and overcome by her loveliness, for he gave no sign as yet of yielding to the glamour she cast upon all other men, nor did his eyes gleam with the despairing adoration the siren knew so well.

She was quick to perceive this, and it piqued her. She paid less and less attention to the answers he gave her, and ceased at last to question him further.

Presently she said, with a strange smile that showed her cruel little teeth gleaming between her scarlet lips, "Why don't you ask me who *I* am, and what I am doing here alone? do not you care to know?"

"If you *will* deign to tell me," he said.

"Then I will tell you," she said; "I am a siren—are you not afraid *now*?"

"Why should I be afraid?" he asked, for the name had no meaning in his ears.

She was disappointed; it was only her voice—nothing else, then—that deprived men of their senses; perhaps this youth was proof even against that; she longed to try, and yet she hesitated still.

"Then you have never heard of me," she said; "you don't know why I sit and watch for the great gilded ships you mortals build for yourselves?"

"For your pleasure, I suppose," he answered. "I have watched them myself many a time; they are grand as they sweep by, with their sharp brazen beaks cleaving the frothing water, and their painted sails curving out firm against the sky. It is good to hear the measured thud of the great oars and the cheerful cries of the sailors as they clamber about the cordage."

She laughed disdainfully. "And you think I care for all that!" she cried. "Where is the pleasure of looking idly on and admiring?—that is for them, not for me. As these galleys of yours pass, I sing—and when the sailors hear, they must come to me. Man after man leaps eagerly into the sea, and makes for the shore—until at last the oars grind and lock together, and the great ship drifts helplessly on, empty and aimless. I like that."

"But the men?" he asked, with an uneasy wonder at her words.

"Oh, they reach the shore—some of them, and then they lie at my feet, just as you are lying now, and I sing on, and as they listen they lose all power or wish to move, nor have I ever heard them speak as you speak; they only lie there upon the sand or rock, and gaze at me always, and soon their cheeks grow hollower and hollower, and their

eyes brighter and brighter—and it is I who make them so!"

"But I see them not," said the youth, divided between hope and fear; "the beach is bare; where, then, are all those gone who have lain here?"

"I cannot say," she replied carelessly; "they are not here for long; when the sea comes up it carries them away."

"And you do not care!" he cried, struck with horror at the absolute indifference in her face; "you do not even try to keep them here?"

"Why should I care?" said the siren lightly; "I do not want them. More will always come when I wish. And it is so wearisome always to see the same faces, that I am glad when they go."

"I will not believe it, siren," groaned the young man, turning from her in bitter anguish; "oh, you cannot be cruel!"

"No, I am not cruel," she said in surprise. "And why will you not believe me? It is true!"

"Listen to me," he said passionately: "do you know how bitter it is to die,—to leave the sunlight and the warm air, the fair land and the changing sea?"

"How can I know?" said the siren. "*I* shall never die—unless—something happens which will never be!"

"You will live on, to bring this bitterness upon others for your sport. We mortals lead but short lives, and life, even spent in sorrow, is sweet to most of us; and our deaths when they come bring mourning to those who cared for us and are left behind. But you lure men to this isle, and look on unmoved as they are borne away!"

"No, you are wrong," she said; "I am not cruel, as you think me; when they are no longer pleasant to look at, I leave them. I never see them borne away. I never thought what became of them at last. Where are they now?"

"They are dead, siren," he said, sadly, "drowned. Life was dear to them; far away there were women and children to whom they had hoped to return, and who have waited and wept for them since. Happy years were before them, and to some at least—but for you—a restful and honored old age. But you called them, and as they lay here the greedy waves came up, dashed them from these rocks and sucked them, blinded, suffocating, battling painfully for breath and life, down into the dark green depths. And now their bones lie tangled in the sea-weed, but they themselves are wandering, sad, restless shades, in the shadowy world below, where is no sun, no happiness, no hope—but only sighing evermore, and the memory of the past!"

She listened with drooping lids, and her chin resting upon her soft palm; at last she said with a slight quiver in her voice, "I did not know—I did not mean them to die. And what can I do? I cannot keep back the sea."

"You can let them sail by unharmed," he said.

"I cannot!" she cried. "Of what use is my power to me if I may not exercise it? Why do you tell me of men's sufferings—what are they to me?"

"They give you their lives," he said; you fill them with a hopeless love and they die for it in misery—yet you cannot even pity them!"

"Is it love that brings them here?" she said eagerly. "What is this that is called love? For I have always known that if I ever love—but then only—I

must die, though what love may be I know not. Tell me, so that I may avoid it!"

"You need not fear, siren," he said, "for, if death is only to come to you through love, you will never die!"

"Still, I want to know," she insisted; "tell me!"

"If a stranger were to come some day to this isle, and when his eyes met yours, you feel your indifference leaving you, so that you have no heart to see him lie ignobly at your feet, and cannot leave him to perish miserably in the cold waters; if you desire to keep him by your side—not as your slave and victim, but as your companion, your equal, for evermore—that will be love!"

"If that is love," she cried joyously, "I shall indeed never die! But that is not how men love *me?*" she added.

"No," he said; "their love for you must be some strange and enslaving passion, since they will submit to death if only they may hear your voice. That is not true love, but a fatal madness."

"But if mortals feel love for one another," she asked, "*they* must die, must they not?"

"The love of a man for a maiden who is gentle and good does not kill—even when it is most hopeless," he said; "and where she feels it in return, it is well for both, for their lives will flow on together in peace and happiness."

He had spoken softly, with a far away look in his eyes that did not escape the siren.

"And you love one of your mortal maidens like that?" she asked. "Is she more beautiful than I am?"

"She is mortal," he said, "but she is fair and gracious, my maiden; and it is she who has my love, and will have it while I live."

"And yet," she said, with a mocking smile, "I could make you forget her."

Her childlike waywardness had left her as she spoke the words, and a dangerous fire was shining in her deep eyes.

"Never!" he cried; "even you cannot make me false to my love! And yet," he added quickly. "I dare not challenge you, enchantress that you are; what is my will against your power?"

"You do not love me yet," she said; "you have called me cruel, and reproached me; you have dared to tell me of a maiden compared with whom I am nothing! You shall be punished. I will have you for my own, like the others!"

"Siren," he pleaded, seizing one of her hands as it lay close to him on the hot gray rock. "take my life if you will—but do not drive away the memory of my love; let me die, if I must die, faithful to her; for what am I, or what is my love, to you?"

"Nothing," she said scornfully, and yet with something of a caress in her tone, "yet I want you; you shall lie here, and hold my hand, and look into my eyes, and forget all else but me."

"Let me go," he cried, rising, and turning back to regain his bark; "I choose life while I may!"

She laughed. "You have no choice," she said; "you are mine!" she seemed to have grown still more radiantly, dazzlingly fair, and presently, as the stranger made his way to the creek where his boat was lying, she broke into the low soft chant whose subtle witchery no mortals had ever resisted as yet.

He started as he heard her, but still he went on over the rocks a little

longer, until at last he stopped with a groan, and turned slowly back; his love across the sea was fading fast from his memory; he felt no desire to escape any longer; he was even eager at last to be back on the ledge at her feet and listen to her forever.

He reached it and sank down with a sigh, and a drowsy delicious languor stole over him, taking away all power to stir or speak.

Her song was triumphant and mocking, and yet strangely tender at times, thrilling him as he heard it, but her eyes only rested now and then, and always indifferently, upon his upturned face.

He wished for nothing better now than to lie there, following the flashing of her supple hands upon the harp-strings and watching every change of her fair face. What though the waves might rise round him and sweep him away out of sight, and drown her voice with the roar and swirl of waters? it would not be just yet.

And the siren sang on; at first with a cruel pride at finding her power supreme, and this youth, for all his fidelity, no wiser than the rest; he would waste there with yearning, hopeless passion, till the sight of him would weary her, and she would leave him to drift away and drown forgotten.

Yet she did not despise him as she had despised all the others; in her fancy his eyes bore a sad reproach, and she could look at him no longer with indifference.

Meanwhile the waves came rolling in fast, till they licked the foot of the rock, and as the foam creamed over the shingle, the siren found herself thinking of the fate which was before him, and, as she thought, her heart was wrung with a new strange pity.

She did not want him to be drowned; she would like him there always at her feet, with that rapt dovotion upon his face; she almost longed to hear his voice again—but that could never be!

And the sun went down, and the crimson flush in the sky and on the sea faded out, the sea grew gray and crested with the white billows, which came racing in and broke upon the shore, roaring sullenly and raking back the pebbles with a sharp rattle at each recoil. The siren could sing no longer; her voice died away, and she gazed on the troubled sea with a wistful sadness in her great eyes.

At last a wave larger than the others struck the face of the low cliff with a shock that seemed to leave it trembling, and sent the cold salt spray dashing up into the siren's face.

She sprang forward to the edge and looked over, with a sudden terror lest the ledge below should be bare—but her victim lay there still, bound fast by her spell, and careless of the death that was advancing upon him.

Then she knew for the first time that she could not give him up to the sea, and she leaned down to him and laid one small white hand upon his shoulder. "The next wave will carry you away," she cried, trembling; "there is still time; save yourself, for I cannot let you die!"

But he gave no sign of having heard her, but lay there motionless, and the wind wailed past them and the sea grew wilder and louder.

She remembered now that no efforts of his own could save him—he was doomed, and she was the cause of it, and she hid her face in her slender

hands, weeping for the first time in her life.

The words he had spoken in answer to her questions about love came back to her: "It was true, then," she said to herself; "it is love that I feel for him. But I cannot love—I must not love him—for if I do, my power is gone, and I must throw myself into the sea!"

So she hardened her heart once more, and turned away, for she feared to die; but again the ground shook beneath her, and the spray rose high into the air, and then she could bear it no more—whatever it cost her, she must save him—for if he died, what good would her life be to her?

"If one of us must die," she said, "*I* will be that one. I am cruel and wicked, as *he* told me; I have done harm enough!" and bending down, she wound her arms round his unconscious body and drew him gently up to the level above.

"You are safe now," she whispered; "you shall not be drowned—for I love you. Sail back to your maiden on the mainland, and be happy; but do not hate me for the evil I have wrought, for suffering and death have come to me in my turn!"

The lethargy into which he had fallen left him under her clinging embrace, and the sad, tender words fell almost unconsciously upon his dulled ears; he felt the touch of her hair as it brushed his cheek, and his forehead was still warm with the kiss she had pressed there as he opened his eyes—only to find himself alone.

For the fate which the siren had dreaded had come upon her at last; she had loved, and she had paid the penalty for loving, and never more would her wild, sweet voice beguile mortals to their doom.

Masked Ball

In the centre of the city of Berlin stands a building, which, probably from its massive proportions, has been styled the Colosseum. It is at present entirely devoted to purposes of gaiety and amusement for the less wealthy classes of that city—balls, concerts, and theatrical exhibitions being there given at a very moderate charge. During the more gay periods of the carnival, in particular, masked balls are given in this extensive building. Upon such occasions, the immense dancing-saloon is crowded to excess; and the galleries, which entirely surround it, are likewise filled with the spectators of the moving panorama below. Although females of the higher orders never venture into the motley throng, a portion of the gallery is railed off and fitted up for the reception of the ladies of the royal household, whence they may at leisure survey the pleasing and lively scene around.

On one of the evenings set apart for these masquerades, I accompanied two officers of the regiment of guards to this scene of merriment, we being all carefully equipped for the occasion. To my companions the concealment of their

persons was essentially necessary, since their recognition as officers of the army would have compelled them to forego the pleasures of the dance. Upon entering, we found the music had already commenced, and the sets for the *contre-danse* which was to open the ball already formed. In order more perfectly to enjoy the scene, we pressed our way through the supper-room, up stairs, and succeeded in gaining a position in the gallery which commanded a full view of the exhilarating spectacle. The young girls were generally dressed in some fancy garb, which, though far from being rich or magnificent, yet displayed much taste in the adornments and selection. There was not that brilliancy and variety in the costumes which might dazzle and gratify the eye, but the mind might well feel charmed at the contemplation of that very simplicity, which at once bespoke the grade and the modesty of the unpretending wearers. The throng which pressed upon the dancers was kept back by a dapper little master of the ceremonies, who, having at length marshalled his forces to his liking, stepped into the middle of the vacant space, and clapping his hands, gave the signal to the musicians, who, instantly ceasing the overture which had been reverberating through the hall, turned to the buoyant air of *Lot ist todt*, and at once set loose the feet of the impatient multitude.

Now the scene was at its height, for the stirring music helped on to a vivacity which it was impossible to resist.

Conceive this spirit-stirring dance to be ended, and the floor of the saloon again crowded and confused. The deafening hum of voices now ascended to our ears in place of the exciting music, whilst all seemed on the move, as if to inspect more narrowly the different figures of a picture so vast and animating. But we had scarcely time to survey the features the scene had now assumed, before the work was again commenced of clearing the centre for dancers; and the director of the ball, who seemed in every respect disposed to exert his power for the benefit of those who might be called more peculiarly his own subjects, had again sounded the directions and given the watchword "Polonaise," which shot like an electric spark through the frames of all, and produced an instant bustle for partners and places. We determined to remain in our seats, since it was almost useless to attempt a participation in the more active feats on the "light fantastic toe," as the crowd was so exceedingly dense. The Polonaise, as given on the confines of Poland, is a much more stirring and varying dance than what is tripped in England under that name. In one of the manœuvres which belong to it, each lady in her turn is led to the centre, where she is danced around by the gentleman; whilst she, holding a handkerchief in her hand, at length tosses it in the air, and she becomes the partner of him whose superior activity gains the possession of it. This had been often repeated with much harmless mirth, when we observed a female more sumptuously dressed than her companions enclosed in the circle; and as a tall young man dressed in black caught her handkerchief, and claimed her hand, he suddenly started back, and uttered one of those piercing cries which betoken some agonising horror, and instantly excite the most lively emotions.

He retreated from the girl, as if he had discovered in her something pestiferous, and, overcome apparently by some terrible feeling, he sank senseless into the arms of those who were standing near him.

An incident of this nature in sure to produce confusion in a ball-room; and from the singular circumstances which attended the one in question, the dancing and music almost instantly ceased, and all other objects were laid aside, save the gratifying the curiosity which had been so suddenly and awfully excited. A general rush took place towards the young man, whose mask had been removed, and exhibited features which had already assumed a death-like hue, whilst a cold perspiration stood upon his brow. As it was impossible to keep off the crowd, who, in their eagerness to observe what was passing, threatened to suffocate the unfortunate object who had caused so general an interest, he was removed into the supper-room, and laid upon one of the settees which stood about. Here a gentleman, pulling off his mask, discovered himself as Prince Charles; and exercising the authority which his rank entitled him to, he requested the room to be immediately cleared, and a physician to be sent for. My companions and myself had in the meantime descended into the room where the patient lay extended; and as I had fortunately a lancet in my pocket, I suggested to the prince the necessity of instantly bleeding him. A young surgeon who was present, hearing the suggestion, offered his aid in the operation, and having received the sanction of the prince, the preparations were in a moment completed. It was with some difficulty that a little blood was drawn, but it had the effect of bringing the young man back again to sense. Even yet, his mind seemed a prey to some horrible phantasy, for, starting up, his whole frame shook with a violent convulsion, and with marks of the most vivid terror, he ejaculated several times: "I saw her! I saw her!" He appeared to have come alone to the ball, for no one stepped forward to claim acquaintance or kinsmanship with him; and it was judged best to remove him to a couch the moment he was able to endure motion. Fortunately, a card in his pocket revealed his address, and with proper precautions, he was thus sent home.

Upon our return to the saloon, we found the mask, which appeared to have been the immediate cause of this extraordinary event, very unconcernedly pursuing her sport, and seemingly unconscious of the speculations that were formed respecting her. She was eagerly interrogated by several persons present as to the young man, to whom her presence had apparently given such a shock, but she persisted in denying any knowledge of him, or of any circumstance which could elucidate the affair. Under such circumstances, the intensity of the feeling that had been raised seemed gradually to subside, and the crowd returned more ardently to the pursuits of the evening, from the little episode which had stayed them for an instant. Some few there were who, feeling that something more than ordinary was involved in the mystery, indulged their speculative fancies in numberless vain conjectures; and as the fertility of their imaginations was increased by sparkling champagne, ne

limit was set to the dark conjurations into which their inherent passion for romance led them. It would be idle to deny that the affair had roused my curiosity in a very considerable degree, and the gloomy version with which I heard others regale themselves, induced in me a restless anxiety to clear up the mystery. It was, however, some time before I was able to procure a relation concerning this young man on which I could place an implicit reliance, and his history was told to me in very nearly the following terms:—

His father was a small proprietor in the neighbourhood of Berlin, and cultivated his own farm. This was his only son, and he had been sent at the proper age to the university of Berlin, where he had been distinguished as much for his superior abilities as for the warmth of his feelings. He was destined to the medical profession, and the progress he had made in the various studies of that important calling, held out the brightest prospects of his future success and eminence. Whilst in his attendance on the medical classes, he had formed an intimacy in a family to which accident had gained him an introduction. A powerful attraction induced him to spend his evenings in the bosom of this family, which was that of a respectable merchant and banker. He had become deeply attached to the daughter of the merchant, and he had every reason to believe that his passion was returned. She was a beautiful young girl, and the graces of her person did not surpass the beauties of her mind. Amiable and accomplished, she was formed to charm; and in the ardent eyes of the young student, she seemed more than earthly.

It was long perhaps before any absolute declaration had revealed to each other the feelings of their hearts; and, by a thousand little incidents, their affection was increased and strengthened, until it became to each the absorbing passion of the soul. The history of their love had in it nothing which removed it from the usual course in which attachment is developed. It will suffice to know, that they lived in the ineffable consciousness of a mutual affection, and that their minds, tinged with the deep romantic feeling so prevalent amongst the youth of Germany, considered the vows that had passed between them as a linking of their destinies, sacred and indissoluble. It was not, however, an easy task to overcome the scruples of the financial father as to the prospects of his future son-in-law; and though the reputation of the young student was spotless, the calculating banker required more than the inclinations of his daughter, and the amiable properties of her admirer, to induce him to consent to their union. Money was a necessary possession in the eyes of a wordly-minded man, who shook his head when they talked of love and mutual happiness. How the old man became at length softened into an approbation of the match, did not clearly appear; but certain it is, that, after the student had passed his examination and obtained his degree, a day was appointed for the betrothing, with his full consent. It may be imagined with what feelings the young physician looked forward to an event which was in his eyes the most important in his life.

The great fair of Leipsic occurred a short time before the auspicious day which was to unite these two happy

beings, and the physician hastened to buy his mistress a bridal-dress from out the vast magazines of manufactures which are there collected. He selected one which was equally rich and engaging, being a white satin festooned with worked flowers of the most brilliant colours. His present was received with a smile of approbation, which repaid him tenfold for the labour he had undertaken, and the promise to wear it on her betrothment rendered his joy supreme.

The ceremony was performed with every circumstance that could heighten the prospects of the parties concerned. Their parents were there consenting, and friends surrounded them whose smiles added their cheering influence. The bride wore the dress which her lover had procured for her, and in his eyes she had never appeared so attractive. The vows were at length pronounced, and the contracts signed. The marriage-day was fixed for the following week. After the ceremony, a sumptuous feast was prepared, in the midst of which a feeling of indisposition compelled the young bride suddenly to seek her chamber. She threw herself on the bed, and—such are the insecurities of a fleeting existence—rose from it no more. A virulent fever attacked her delicate frame, and carried her unresistingly and remorselessly to the tomb. The feelings of an impassioned youth, thus robbed of her who was so shortly to have become his wife, may be more easily imagined than described. To say that he wept, and raved, and tore his hair, would perhaps little express the deep intensity of his anguish. Only one request he made: it was, that she should be buried in the dress which she wore at their betrothal. He followed her to the grave, and, overpowered by his feelings, threw himself upon the coffin as it was about to be covered up, and, with a frenzied vehemence, insisted upon having one more look before the grave was closed for ever. The coffin-lid was taken off, and he gazed upon the clammy features of the decaying corpse, until his head grew dizzy, and he was drawn senseless from the grave.

It was not only to the bereaved lover that the view of the dead body of his mistress had been of moment: the grave-digger had perceived with emotion the magnificent habiliments which adorned the corpse, and his cupidity was excited. In the dead of night, he despoiled the body, and presented to his own daughter the flowered satin frock which had formed the bridal-dress of the deceased young lady. It was long after these events that she wore this identical dress at the masked ball at the Colosseum. The girl herself was ignorant of the mode by which her father had gained possession of it, though the richness of his gift had in some measure excited her surprise. She therefore adorned herself in the spoils of the grave, in perfect unconsciousness of the unhallowed violation that had been committed. It is needless to add, that it was this dress which caused the young man's sudden horror, which I have described. It was a garment so peculiar as scarcely to allow a doubt as to its identity; and when it suddenly flashed before his eyes, he thought he saw his departed mistress arisen from the grave, to upbraid him for the levity which permitted his presence at a ball. It was stated that a remarkable resemblance existed in the figures of the two females; and as the grave-digger's

daughter was masked, the horrible conception of the young enthusiast will not be considered as altogether unnatural or incredible.

From the notoriety which the circumstances gained, an inquiry was instituted into the affair, and, by an inspection of the rifled tomb, the guilt of the grave-digger was made apparent, and he is now expiating his crime as a convicted felon. From the information I acquired respecting the physician, it appeared that he overcame the shock which he had received, though he had passed through many fits of delirium, and had suffered from a fever which had often threatened the extinction both of his reason and of his life.

A Second Espousal

We learn from ancient accounts of Pisa, that it was formerly esteemed one of the most wealthy and powerful cities, not only of Tuscany, but of all Italy, and celebrated for the courage and activity of its inhabitants. It happened that, a considerable time previous to its subjugation by the Florentine republic, a certain Milanese doctor, who had been studying medicine at Paris, came for a short time to take up his residence there. During his stay, he met with such uncommon success in his practice among the citizens, several of whom he had snatched from the very jaws of destruction, that, with fees and reputation increasing upon him so fast, he scarcely thought himself justified in leaving a place to the customs and manners of whose inhabitants he was already becoming attached. He therefore felt inclined to abandon his native city altogether, and very shortly ceased even to think that there was such a place as Milan in the world. For he had heard, only a few days before his arrival at Pisa, that his aged mother, the sole relation whom he had left behind, had departed this life. So he believed that he could do nothing better than continue where he was, and at no distant period, by his industry and success, he amassed a considerable fortune, took an elegant house, and assumed the dignified title of Maestro Basilio da Milano.

Soon after he had the pleasure of having it frequently hinted to him by several respectable Pisanese that the honour of his alliance would by no means be unacceptable to them, and many were the young beauties who passed in review before him. Yet he at length fixed his eyes upon a young lady, both of whose parents were deceased, and who, though not rich, was of a good family. She brought the doctor little more as her wedding portion than the house she lived in, though she afterwards presented him with a large family; and for many years, increasing in wealth, they lived extremely happily together. By this lady he had three sons and a daughter, the latter of whom, as well as one of her brothers, their parents very happily bestowed in marriage when they became old enough to settle in the world. The youngest boy had a decided taste for letters, while the second, who gave his parents great anxiety, was of an extremely dull and

obstinate disposition, with a great aversion to learning and every species of improvement; morose, abstracted, and unamiable, when his negative was once pronounced, it was as unalterable as his own nature.

The doctor at last finding that he could mould him into nothing, to get rid of him, sent him into the country, where he had purchased at least half a dozen different estates, and whither he was fond of retiring to escape the continued noise and turbulence of the city. But about ten years after he had despatched his son Lazzaro—for this was the fool's name—into this retreat, there arose a dreadful malady in Pisa, which carried off numbers of people in a violent fever, which subsiding into a deep lethargy, they awakened no more, and it was, moreover, as infectious as the plague. The doctor, desirous of showing his skill, and taking the lead of the other physicians on this occasion, exposed himself so fearlessly for his fees, that he took the infection, which soon set at defiance every application of his most esteemed syrups and recipes, and in a few hours he retired from the profession for ever. Nor was this all, for he communicated the disease to his family, and one after another they all died, until there was only an old nurse left alive in the house.

It was indeed a dreadful visitation upon all Pisa, and the mortality would have been still greater had not the survivors fled in haste from the city. With the change of season, however, its severity seemed to mitigate, the persons attacked, gradually recovered, the inhabitants returned to their houses, and the people resumed their usual occupations.

It was now that Lazzaro succeeded to all the property left by his deceased relations, though he merely added a single domestic to the reduced establishment of his father, consisting only of the old servant. His farms and the receipt of his rents were left in the care of an agent, as he bestowed no attention upon business. Many families, notwithstanding, appeared anxious for the honour of his alliance, without making the slightest objection to his rusticity and folly; but the only answer that he uniformly returned to these proposals was, that he had made up his mind to wait for at least four years, and that he afterwards might perhaps be induced to think of it. As he was known never to have changed his mind, no one importuned him further upon the subject. Though he was fond of amusements in his own way, he admitted no one to his confidence, and started on beholding a card of invitation like a guilty spirit at the sign of the cross.

Opposite to his house there resided a man of the name of Gabriello, with his wife and two children, a boy about five years old and a little girl, whom he supported as well as he was able by his skill in bird-catching and fishing. Though his abode was humble, his nets and cages were of the very best construction, and he managed them so judiciously, that, with the assistance of his wife, Santa, who had the reputation of an excellent sempstress, he made a very pretty livelihood. It happened that Gabriello was an exact counterpart in voice, countenance, and appearance of our foolish friend Lazzaro; their very complexion and their beards were of the same cut and quality. If they were not twin brothers, they ought to

have been so, for they were not only of the same age and stature, but in their taste and manners they greatly resembled each other. It would have been impossible even for the fisherman's wife to have recognized Lazzaro disguised in the dress of her husband; the only distinction that could be made was that one was dressed as a labourer and the other like a gentleman.

Pleased with the happy resemblance which he could not but acknowledge between himself and the fisherman, and fancying it laid him under a sort of obligation for which he felt grateful, he began to solicit his acquaintance. This he did in the pleasantest manner possible, frequently sending him good things from his table and a bottle of old wine. The fisherman's gratitude was so pleasing that he soon also sent for him to dine and sup with him, passing the evenings in the most agreeable conversations imaginable; the adventures of the good fisherman, and the prodigious lies he told, being a never-failing source of admiration and delight to Lazzaro. For the fisherman's skill extended far beyond his art, and the rogue contrived to insinuate himself into the good graces of his patron, until the latter was hardly ever easy out of his company.

Thus having one day treated his rustic friend to a noble feast, they began to talk, over their wine, of the various modes of fishing, all of which were explained greatly to the satisfaction of the host. None, however, seemed to take his fancy so much as the description of the diving net, on which the fisherman dwelt with uncommon enthusiasm, as the most useful and delightful invention in the world. It inspired Lazzaro with the ambition of immediately witnessing a specimen of this part of the piscatory art, in which great fish may be caught, not with nets and lines merely, but with the very mouth, a drag-net hanging round the neck of the diving fisherman! "Oh, let us go now! let us go now!" exclaimed the happy Lazzaro, while the guest, as usual, expressed himself ready to attend his patron. As it happened to be the middle of summer, nothing could be better; and finishing their dessert, Gabriello took his drag-nets and they went out together. They bent their way through the Porta à Mare directly towards the Arno, along the fence of pales, above the great bank crowned with alder-trees, spreading a most delicious shade. There the fisherman begged his patron to sit down and refresh himself while he observed the manner in which he should proceed. Having first stripped himself, he bound the nets round his arms and neck, and then, boldly plunging into the river, down he went. But being a complete adept at his business, he rose again very shortly to the surface, bringing up with him at one drag, eight or ten great fish, all of the best kind. This was a real miracle in the eyes of Lazzaro, who could not divine how he could possibly see to catch them under water, and he resolved to ascertain the manner in which it was done. With this view, being a hot July day, and thinking that a cold bath might refresh him, he prepared, with Gabriello's assistance, to step in. He was conducted by him to a shallow part, and when about up to his knees, Gabriello left him to his own discretion, only warning him that though the bottom shelved down very gradually, he had better go no farther than where a certain post rose above the rest; and

pointing it out to him once more, he pursued his business. Lazzaro felt singular pleasure in being thus left to himself, and splashing about, performed all sorts of antics in the water. His eyes were often fixed in admiration upon his friend Gabriello, who every now and then rose from the bottom with a fish in his mouth, the better to please his patron, who at this sight could no longer restrain his applause.

"It is very plain now," he cried, "that it must be light under water, or he could never have seen how to catch that fish in his mouth, besides all the others in his net. I wish I knew how." So saying, the next time that he saw Gabriello dive, he imitated the motion by ducking his head, and at the same time losing his footing, slipped gently down, till he not only reached the post, but passed it with his head still under water. When he fairly got out of his depth, still trying whether he could see, it appeared a strange thing to him; for he found he could no longer get his breath, and he endeavoured in vain to fight his way up again, the water pouring in at his mouth and ears, at his nose and eyes, in such a way that he could see nothing. In short, the current at length catching him, bore him away in perfect amazement, and he was too far gone to cry out for help. Gabriello was in the meantime employed in diving down into a large hole he had discovered near the stakes, full of fish, which he was handing into his net with the greatest alacrity, while his poor friend and patron was already more than half dead, having now come up and gone down again for the third time, and at the fourth he rose no more.

Just at this moment, Gabriello, with a prodigious draught, again appeared, and turning round with a joyous face to look at Lazzaro, what was his surprise and terror when he found his master was gone! Gazing round with the hope of perceiving him somewhere, he only found his clothes, just as he had left them. In the utmost alarm he ran again to the water, and in a short time discovered his body thrown by the current on the opposite bank. He swam to the place, and on perceiving that his good patron was quite cold and lifeless, he stood for some moments like a statue, overpowered with grief and terror, without knowing how to act. In the first place, he was afraid, if he published the tidings of his death, of being accused of having drowned him to plunder him of his money, an idea which threw him into such alarm, that covering his face with his hands, he stood buried in profound grief and reflection. At length he suddenly uttered an exclamation of joy, as the thought rushed into his mind, "I am safe! I am safe! There are no witnesses of the accident, and I know what I will do: it is the hour when, luckily, everybody is asleep." With these words he thrust the nets and the fish into his great basket, and taking the dead body of Lazzaro on his shoulders, heavy as it was, he placed it among some wet reeds hard by the shore. He then bound the nets round his poor friend's arms, and again bearing him to the water, he contrived to fasten the strings in such a way round one of the deepest stakes, that they could with difficulty be withdrawn, giving the body the appearance of having been thus entangled while fishing.

He then assumed his patron's attire, and got even into his very shoes, and

sat down quietly on the bank, resolved to try what fortune would do for him. His strong resemblance to his deceased friend, if successful, would now not only save his life, but make it ever after, as he believed, most happy and comfortable. As the hours seemed now arrived, with equal skill and courage, he entered upon the dangerous experiment, and began to call out lustily for help in the person of poor Lazzaro: "Help! help, good people, or the poor fisherman will be drowned! Oh, he comes up no more!" and with this he roared out tremendously. The miller was the first man who reached the spot, but numbers of people were gathering on all sides to learn what could possibly cause such an insufferable noise. Gabriello continued to bellow even for some time after they arrived, the better to counterfeit his patron, weeping the whole time as he told his tale—how the poor fisherman had dipped, and brought up fish so often; but the last time he had stopped nearly an hour under water, and having waited for him in vain, he began to be afraid he was coming up no more. The people inquiring, with a smile at his simplicity, whereabouts it was, he pointed out the spot, on which the miller, who was a great friend of Gabriello's, began to strip, and plunged into the river. And there, sure enough, as he believed, he found his friend Gabriello caught in his own net, and entangled fast by his neck and heels to the unlucky stake.

"Heaven have mercy on us!" cried the miller; "here he is, poor Gabriello, poor Gabriello! quite drowned in his own entangled net;" using his utmost efforts at the same time to loosen it from about the stake. Such were the lamentations of Gabriello's friends on hearing this, that he could scarcely refrain from betraying himself. Two more threw themselves into the water to assist the miller, and at length with some difficulty, they fished the body out. The arms and legs were all entangled in the net, and his relations in their indignation tore the unlucky cords to tatters. The tidings of his death being spread abroad, a priest immediately attended, and the body was borne upon a bier to the nearest church, where it was laid out in order to be recognised by Gabriello's friends. His disconsolate widow, accompanied by other relations bewailing him and her children, now hastened to the spot. Believing the body to be his, a scene of tender affliction ensued. After beating her breast and tearing her hair, she sat down and wept with her little children, while every one around, and above all the real Gabriello, could not restrain their tears. So overpowered indeed was he by his feelings, that pulling his poor patron's hat over his brows and hiding his face in his pocket-handkerchief, he addressed his wife before all the people in a hoarse and piteous voice: "Come, good woman, do not despair, do not cry so. I will provide for you, and take care both of you and your children; the poor man lost his life in trying to amuse me, and I shall not forget it. He was a clever fisherman; but leave off crying—I tell you I will provide for you. So go home, and go in peace, for you shall want for nothing while I live, and when I die I will leave you what is handsome;" and this he ended with a kind of growl, intended to express his concern both for her and the deceased fisherman. For these words he was highly applauded

by all the people present, while the imaginary widow, somewhat consoled by his promises, was conveyed back by her relations to her own dwelling.

But Gabriello in his new character immediately marched and took possession of Lazzaro's house, walking in exactly as he had often observed his poor friend was wont to do, without noticing any one. He went into a richly furnished chamber overlooking some beautiful gardens, and taking the keys out of his deceased patron's pockets, he began to search the trunks and boxes, where he found other lesser keys, which admitted him to all the treasures and valuables in the place. It was a storehouse of wealth indeed, for it not only contained the fortunes of the deceased doctor and other relations of Lazzaro, to the amount of several thousand florins of gold, but was equally rich in jewels and plate. At the sight of these Gabriello repressed with difficulty loud exclamations of rapture and surprise, and he sat down to devise fresh means of supporting his title to Lazzaro's estates. With this view, being perfectly acquainted with his late friend's character, he went down about supper-time uttering the most strange and wild exclamations of grief. The two servants of the house, who had heard of the fatal accident, and the cause of it, ran hastily to his relief. But instead of listening to their consolation, he directly ordered six loaves and a portion of the supper, with two flasks of wine, to be carried to the disconsolate widow across the way. On the return of the domestic with the poor widow's grateful thanks, Gabriello partook of a light supper set out in the handsomest style, and, without saying a word to any one, shut himself up in his chamber and went to bed. There he remained until the hour of nine the next morning, in order the better to indulge his reflections and his grief. Though the difference between his voice and language and those of their former master was perceptible to his domestics, they attributed it entirely to his violent sorrow for his deceased friend. And the poor widow, finding how well he seemed inclined to keep his word of supporting her and her children, very soon dismissed the condolences of her relations and retired as usual quietly to rest. The next day Gabriello began to rise at his old friend's usual hour, and though he had now a variety of cares upon his hands, he never permitted the poor widow, Santa, to want for anything. He imitated his late patron's way of life very exactly, for he really seemed to have also succeeded to his indolence, which he adopted without an effort. He was still, however, extremely concerned to hear that his wife's grief for his death continued unabated, though he certainly felt flattered by it, and began to think in what way he could console her, and how he could contrive means to marry her again. Feeling not a little puzzled upon the subject, he resolved to go to her house, where he found her, accompanied by one of her cousins, it not being long since the period of his supposed death. Having informed her that he wished to speak to her upon an affair of some importance, her kind relation immediately took his leave, aware of the numerous obligations which her rich neighbour had so charitably conferred upon her.

When he had left them, Gabriello closed the door with the same air of familiarity and confidence as formerly.

at which the poor woman could not help testifying some surprise, fearful lest he might presume too far upon the services he had rendered her. When Gabriello advanced, taking her little boy by the hand, she drew back timidly, at which action he could not help expressing his admiration of his wife's propriety in an audible voice and with a grin of delight. Then taking her by the hand, he spoke to her in his accustomed manner, and she gazed for a moment doubtfully in his face, while Gabriello, taking his little boy in his arms, tenderly caressed him, saying, "What, boy, is your mother weeping at our good fortune?" and shaking some money in his hand with a triumphant air, he gave it to him, and went on playing with him as usual. But perceiving that his wife was overpowered with a variety of emotions which she could not control, unable longer to disguise the truth, he first fastened the door, and, fearful lest any one might overhear the strange story he had to reveal, he drew her into an inner chamber, and there related the whole affair just as it had passed. It is impossible to convey an idea of her surprise and joy as she hung weeping upon his neck. But they were delicious tears, and her husband kissed them away with far greater rapture than he had ever before felt, and they sank overpowered with emotion into each other's arms.

It was necessary, however, to use the utmost precaution in retaining the fortune they had so strangely won; and after explaining the plans he had in view, and engaging his wife's promise to keep the matter secret, Gabriello returned to his new house. His wife, still affecting to retain her grief for his loss, frequently took care, before all her neighbors, to recommend her poor children to the gentleman's notice, who uniformly treated them with kindness.

The ensuing night he lay broad awake devising how he might best put his future plans into execution. Having at length resolved, he rose early, and bent his way to the Church of Santa Catterina, where he knew a venerable and devout monk, almost worshipped by the good people of Pisa, whose name was Fra Anselmo. He here announced a very strange and important piece of business, respecting which he wished to consult the conscience of the learned friar. The good father carried him into his cell, where Gabriello introduced himself as Lazzaro di Maestro Bahilio da Milano, relating at the same time his whole family genealogy, and how he had remained sole heir of the whole property owing to the late plague. He at last came to the story of poor Gabriello, the fisherman, laying the sole blame of the accident upon himself in persuading the wretched man to accompany him in a fishing excursion along the Arno.

He then proceeded to relate the deplorable circumstances in which he had left his family, and taking into serious consideration the cause of the calamity, he felt it weigh so heavily upon his conscience, that he was resolved at all risks to make every reparation in his power. But what reparation could be made to a woman, who, however lowly her condition, had fondly loved her husband, except by consoling her for her loss by directing her affections towards another object. "And the truth is," he continued, "I am willing to marry her, and become a father to her children, and then," he continued with the greatest simplicity, "perhaps God will forgive me

for the great sin I committed in taking him out a fishing with me." Though the pious father here smiled, it appeared so conscientious a proposal that he did not venture to oppose it, saying that he would not fail in this way to obtain the mercy of Heaven upon many of his past sins. Hearing this comfortable doctrine, Gabriello opened his purse-strings and presented the friar with thirty pieces, observing that he wished the mass of San Gregorio to be sung for three Mondays together, to ensure peace to the soul of the deceased fisherman. The venerable monk's eyes brightened at the sight, and he promised mass should be sung the very next Monday. With respect to the projected alliance, he observed to Gabriello, that he rather praised him for his disregard to wealth and nobility in the proposed union. "Make no account of it," he continued; "you will be rich enough in the grace of Heaven: we all belong to the same father and the same mother, and virtue is the only true nobility. I know both her and her parents; you could not do better, for she is born of a good family. So, go home, my good signor, and I will attend you when you please." "Well, to-day, to-day, then!" cried Gabriello, as he prepared to depart. "Ah! leave it to me," returned the friar, "and take my blessing with you, my son, and bring the ring in the meantime." Gabriello hastened home, and purchased the ring accordingly, persuading himself there could be no harm in making sure that everything was quite correct in the difficult circumstances under which he laboured. So, with the consent of all the lady's friends and relations, the marriage was celebrated a second time. Gabriello, in the person of Lazzero, then conducted his wife to her new house, where a splendid feast was prepared, and all their friends met to receive them. Soon after, Gabriello gradually assuming the manners of a gentleman, dismissed the old maid and man-servant with liberal gratuities, and set up a handsome equipage and noble establishment. He astonished all Lazzaro's friends with the striking improvements that had taken place in the simpleton's manners, while his wife, Santa, became exceedingly genteel in all her actions. The twice-married pair spent together a tranquil and happy life, and had two sons subsequently born, who, assuming a new family surname, called themselves De' Fortunati, and from these children sprung a race of men renowned both in letters and in arms.

Anne Gillespie's Character

John Campbell of Kilcagar went out one day to hunt on the lands of Glen-Orn, which then belonged to M'Culloch of Gresharvish. Mr. Campbell not returning in the evening, his lady became very much alarmed, especially as his favourite pointer-dog, Eachen, came home alone, and apparently very disconsolate, and his dam, Oich, did not come at all. Mrs. Campbell did not know in the least where to send in search of her husband, but she raised

the men-servants before daylight, some of whom went for the fox-hunter, who knew all the shooting-ground in the vicinity, and they went searching and calling the whole day, but found nothing.

In the meantime, a shepherd of Glen-Orn arrived at Kilcagar, and told Mrs. Campbell that he had found her husband lying shot through the heart in Correi-Balloch—a wild wooded ravine on the lands of Glen-Orn, and his pointer-bitch lying at his side moaning, but refusing to leave him. The man told his story so abruptly, that Mrs. Campbell fainted, and was long unable to give orders about anything. The body, however, was brought home, poor Oich following it, and finally buried in the island of Lismore, the burial-place of the family; but Oich followed it there, and though brought home many times, and greatly caressed, she always went back again, until at last she died on the grave.

A strict investigation was immediately set on foot regarding the mysterious murder of Mr. Campbell, for, as his gun was found loaded, it was certain he could not have shot himself; and after some inquiry, Mr. M'Culloch was arrested, and taken to the prison of Inverary, examined by the sheriff and committed for trial. And here is the trial, which I believe is nearly the truth.

Mr. M'Culloch acknowledged, both before the sheriff and the lords of the justiciary court at the circuit, that he had heard the report of a gun on his lands, had gone to the place, and, on seeing the pointers, went to the spot, where he found his friend Mr. Campbell lying at the point of death; that he turned him over, when he vomited some blood, and then expired.

Mrs. Campbell, on being examined, said she did not believe Mr. M'Culloch would have shot her husband, although the latter should have shot all the game on the other's estate; for that they were particular friends, and always shot together, visiting each other in the most friendly and amicable way very frequently. The paper then proceeds to detail the examination of William Bawn M'Nichol.

'Where were you that morning when Mr. Campbell was murdered?'

'I was in Clash-ne-shalloch.'

'How far is that from Correi-Balloch?'

'She could take a tay to go it, or half a tay, or an hour if hersel was to rhun it.'

'And you heard the shot fired from the one place to the other?'

'Yes, she heard it go out with a creat plow-off.'

'And what made you leave the one glen to go to the other? Did you suspect anything?'

'Hoo, yes; hersel did suspect something.'

'What did you suspect?'

'She suspected tat she would get a thram of te whisky, or te rhoom, or te prhandy at lheast; and may be a shilling into her sporran.'

'And what did you see when you arrived?'

'Hersel saw Mr. Campbell's two dhogs sitting with teir tails upon te ground, and one of tem was poo-hooing; and then when she came dhown, tere was Mr. Campbell himself lhying, and grheat strheam of plood rhunning down from his pody.'

'And was he quite dead then?'

'Hoo, yes; him was very dhead.'

'And did you see any other person in the Correi that day?'

'Nho; she saw'd no other pody put Mr. M'Culloch, who was rhunning very strong up the Balloch.'

'Was it towards his own house that he was running?'

'Nho—such a question! It would pe lhong pefore rhunning up to Balloch would take him to his own house. His own house lies down there, and he was rhunning here.'

'And what did he do when you came to the corpse?'

'He turned pack again, and came to me, and desired me to go with all haste to Kilcagar, and tell Mrs. Campbell tat her husband was lying in te Correi shot, and dhead, and mhoordered, which I did with a heavy heart; for Mr. Campbell was a good and kind man.'

'Did you never hear of a great beauty, named Anne Gillespie, who did not bear the best character in the country?'

'Hoo! hersel will pe telling you whatever she has seen with her own eyes, put she will swear to no reports.'

'Was she not lost about the time of Mr. Campbell's death, and was it not suspected that she likewise had been made away with?'

'Hersel has never saw'd her dhead nor alhive since tat tay; so tat she may be mhoordered, and dhead, and bhuried, or trown into te sea, and eahten up with te creat furshes; or she may pe living, and as peautiful as ever, for anyting tat hersel does know.'

'You say you have never seen her since that day—did you see her on that day?'

'Hersel saw — saw — saw a young woman rhunning down Corrie-Deach.'

'And was that woman Mrs. Anne Gillespie?'

'It might pe her, and it might not pe her; she could not say. Tere were words aproad.'

'How far were you from her?'

'Hoo, hersel was very near; not apove two or tree miles from her.'

'That is a great distance.'

'Oh, it pe no distance in te Highland If we had peen any nhearer, we would have been together.'

'Did you know Mrs. Anne Gillespie personally?'

'Hoo, yes; she knowed her very well.'

'And what sort of a woman was she?'

'She was a very ghood, and a very peautiful, lady.'

'Did you hear two shots from the Balloch, or only one that morning?'

'Hersel was hearing two shots—one pefore and another afther.'

A great many more witnesses were examined, but their evidences were greatly at variance; and nothing more could be elicited, save that it was certain Mrs. Anne Gillespie was a person of doubtful character, and that she was lost, and that many suspected she had got foul play for her life. Finally, the counsel for the crown demanded a verdict of guilty against Mr. M'Culloch; but one of the judges, in summing up the evidence, expressed his doubts. He acknowledged that the circumstantial evidence was very strong against Mr. M'Culloch, yet still, taking his character, temper, and disposition altogether into view, he could hardly conceive that evidence to be thoroughly conclusive. It was true he was the only man observed in the Balloch, and was discovered running away; and when he saw that discovery was made, he turned again. His hands were bloody, and his gun was discharged. Mr. Campbell had been killed by a species of shot which was found

to be the very same kind as that contained in Mr. M'Culloch's lead-bag. All these circumstances, taken together, formed a mass of strong evidence. But whence could spring the motive for the one friend murdering the other?—and how was Anne Gillespie concerned in the matter? He confessed he could not see his way through such a mesh. He therefore had some faint hopes that the prisoner really was not guilty. He was far from exculpating him, for it was a dark and mysterious affair, and the evidence was grievously against him; but if the honourable jury viewed the matter with the same doubts as he did, he begged they would give the prisoner the advantage of them. There was one thing he was bound to remind them of—that it was quite manifest the person who shot Mr. Campbell had been close at him. Now, if the thing had taken place by accident, which was the most likely thing in the world, the prisoner would have acknowledged it, and then no blame would have attached to him; but as he peremptorily denies it, you are obliged either to return a verdict of *not proven*, or of *wilful murder*. I must, therefore, leave him in the hands of his countrymen, and may God influence their hearts to return a just and true verdict!

Mr. M'Culloch appearing at that time very much affected, and like to faint, he was removed, and had something to drink. He asked the guards how they thought the verdict would go, and was answered, that there was every probability it would go against him. He said he thought so too; for had he been a juryman on any other criminal, he should have given it against him. The jury were enclosed, and continued in fierce and angry discussion for five hours and twenty minutes, and then returned a verdict of GUILTY, by a majority of two. M'Culloch was again brought into court, and the justice-clerk asked him if he had anything to say why judgment of death should not be pronounced against him. He said he had only one very simple reason, which was, that he was as innocent of his friend's death as his own child that sat on her mother's knee. He neither blamed the judges nor the jury, for every word of the evidence was true. There was not a false word advanced against him; and it was singular how strongly they all tended to corroborate an innocent man's guilt. Had he been a juryman on the same trial, he would have voted with the majority. Therefore, he had no reasons to urge why sentence of death should not be pronounced upon him; only he begged for a distant day, as he was certain the Almighty would not suffer an innocent man to die an ignominious death, and his family to be disgraced and ruined, without bringing to light something relating to that horrid transaction. He was sentenced to be executed that day six months, on the 27th of October.

Mr. M'Culloch received all the admonitions of the several divines toward confession with the greatest indignation, remaining obstinate to the last, and still no light was thrown on the mysterious murder of Mr. Campbell, save that, on the day after the trial, a great burly Highlander demanded a word of the lord justice-clerk, who, being a proud man, received him churlishly, saying: 'What do you want with me, you wretched-looking being?'

'Hersel shust pe wanting to tell your shudgeship, tat you must reverse te sen-

tence on honest Mr. M'Culloch instantly, for it is not a fair one, and cannot be a fair one.'

'What do you mean, sir?'

'What do I mean? Hubabub! Did you not see tat tere was six Campbells on te shury? Te shudge hersel was a Campbell, te man who was shot was a Campbell, and how could ony man get shustice? If you had not been what you are, a Campbell, you could easily have seen trough tat tere could pe no shustice. And hersel can tell you, had it peen a Gillespie, a Stuart, or a M'Donald, tat had been shot, and a Campbell who had shot him, with te same shudge and shury, tere would have peen no word of guilty. Now, I tell you tat you, and your shury of Campbells, are both knaves and fools, else you might have seen tat Mr. M'Culloch was no more guilty of shooting his friend John Campbell, than you were.'

'Then I tell you that *you* are a knave, a ruffian, and a madman. Take him out, and give him into custody.'

'Just stop, if you plaise, till I tell your honour's clorious mhajesty, tat when te shot was fired tat killed John Campbell, Duncan M'Culloch was half a mile off, and out of sight too.'

'And how do you know that?'

'Pecaus I saw it with my own eyes at a great distance.'

'Who else could it be, then, that shot him?'

'Hoo, but let you and your Campbells, with your wise heads, find out tat. Tat pe your business, and none of mine. So you have no ting to do with all your wisdom, put send word over to te prison, to let him forth.'

'Oh, the man is mad! stark, staring mad. What flummery is this? Seize him, force him out, and see that he be properly secured.'

The attendants then seized the fellow, and forced him out, while he continued calling to let Mr. M'Culloch go free.

His assertion was totally disregarded by the proper authorities. It created, however, a sensation among the bystanders, and a petition was got up for a reprieve to M'Culloch. Who it was signed by, or by whom presented, I do not know; but it had not the desired effect. Reprieves and pardons were not so common in those days as now, and Duncan M'Culloch was left for execution.

Now, it so happened that the day appointed for Mr. M'Culloch's execution, the 27th of October, was the very one preceding the opening of the autumn western circuit; and on that morning, as the lord justice-clerk and the lord provost of Glasgow were sitting at an early breakfast, the attendants stated to them that there was a very strange-looking fellow at the door, who demanded an audience of their lordships; that they had repulsed him several times, but he would take no refusal, saying that his message was one of life and death, and he must and would speak with them.

'No, no—tell him we have nothing to do with him,' said the justice-clerk. 'I like not such persons intruding themselves into our presence. There is danger in it.'

'There shall be no danger to you, my lord, I answer for it,' said the provost. 'And since it is an affair of life and death, I think we had better hear what the fellow has to say. With all these attendants, and ourselves, we have nothing to fear from one man; so I think

with your permission, we will admit him.'

'Let him be searched, then, that he has no arms about him.'

'Yes, my lord.'

The fellow was then searched, and admitted, and a frightful-looking figure he was. His form was emaciated; his face the colour of clay; his beard sticking out all around, like a bottle-brush; his tufted hair protruding far beyond the rim of his crabbed Argyleshire bonnet, which he did not even deign to lay aside, but, stepping close up to the lord justice-clerk, he addressed him thus: 'Does your honour's clorious mhajesty know me?'

'No, sir; I know nothing about you, nor do I wish to know anything. Keep your distance.'

'Then, sir, if you do not know me, you don't know a man who has ten times more truth and honour than yourself, for all te pride and wisdom tat is pelow tat pig mealy wig of yours. Did not I tell you this day six months tat Mr. M'Culloch was no more guilty of the death of John Campbell of Kilcagar than you was? And did you tink tat a true Highlander was coming to tell you a porn lie for no ting? And yet you are suffering tat ghood honest shentleman to pe dragged to the gallows tis tay, and hanged like a dog, for a crime of which you know he was not guilty; for did not I tell you so, and was not tat enough? But here am I, Pheader Gillespie, who will not suffer an innocent shentleman to die for a crime in which he had no hand. I was loath to give up the murderer before; but since it must pe so, it must pe so. I then tell you, shentlemans, tat it was I myself tat shot John Campbell.'

'You who shot John Campbell!' cried the lord provost, starting to his feet: 'I declare this surpasses all that I ever heard or witnessed in my life! My lord, this is a very serious matter indeed. We must take it upon ourselves to defer the execution of Mr. M'Culloch, till the truth of the circumstance be ascertained, and a reprieve can be obtained.'

'No, no,' said the justice-clerk; 'the man is deranged, and knows not what he is saying. Justice must have its way: the sentence must be executed.'

'O, have you no fear of Cot pefore your eyes?' cried the Highlander, with great vehemence. 'Remember, if you murder an innocent man, you shall have to answer for it. Did I not tell you long ago tat Duncan M'Culloch was innocent? and do I not tell you now tat it was I who shot John Campbell of Kilcagar? Yes, it was I who shot him trough te pody and te heart. I had my own reasons for killing him. But I could not leave an innocent man to suffer in my stead. And here I am, to take te shustice of Cot and man; so if one must suffer according to te mandate of te great Campbells, why, then, come pind my hands pehind my pack, and hang me, for I, and I alone, did the deed for which he is contemned to suffer. But I'll first be tried by a shury of my countrymen, not by you, nor by your clan, although we were once the same. No; I'll object to every man whose name is Campbell; but I will not retract one word that I have uttered. I shot John Campbell, and I did it with all my heart; and were it to do now, I would do it still.'

'You are a braver, an honester, and a better man than your appearance bespeaks you, Gillespie,' said the lord

provost. 'There is something truly noble in this voluntary confession of yours; and whatever may be the issue, you shall not want my best interests. But an innocent man shall not suffer under my jurisdiction. I must go and take measures for the preservation of M'Culloch's life instantly, for his time is nearly run. In the meantime, Gillespie, I must commit you to prison.'

'You may, if you please, my lord; but hersel tinks, after what she has done, tere pe little ochasion for it. If Duncan M'Culloch is once fairly released and restored to his family, I may run away if I can, but not till then.'

'Well, I think I have a right to take your word, for a more gallant immolation I never witnessed, and never read of. Remain in my house, under guard, until I take measures regarding you. In the meantime, I must hasten to the sheriff and the prison, for I have no time to lose.'

When the lord provost entered the prison, the head-keeper opened the door and announced him. He found the condemned man sitting on his straw pallet, with his wife on one side, and his eldest daughter, a girl about fifteen, on the other, both leaning on his bosom, and crying until their hearts were like to break. 'I am quite resigned, and ready to go with you, my lord,' said he; 'you will just release me from a scene which no husband and father's heart can long sustain. I am quite ready.'

'I am very happy to hear it, Mr. M'Culloch; but I am happier still to inform you, that a very singular piece of information has been communicated to me this morning. A wild, savage-looking fellow, calling himself Peter Gillespie, or some such name, came into my house, and before the lord justice-clerk and me, declared himself the murderer of Mr. John Campbell, and offered himself to be executed in your place, for that he alone was the guilty person; and he says, that you were half a mile distant, and out of sight, when the murder was committed; so that the sheriff and I have agreed to defer your execution until a pardon can be obtained from the proper authorities.'

Mrs. M'Culloch fainted with joy at this intelligence. As for M'Culloch himself, he burst into tears, and exclaimed: 'I said the Almighty would not suffer an innocent man to perish by an ignominious death, and a lovely and helpless family to be disgraced and ruined; and He has not disappointed me in the end! O blessed, ever blessed be His name! for now that I am freed from the foul stain of murder, I regard death as nothing. But Pheader Gillespie, Pheader Gillespie, to offer himself a sacrifice for me! Ah! that is what I do not deserve at his hand! Do you think the poor fellow will be condemned?'

'I am afraid he will; but he shall not want my best interests, for it was so noble of him to give up his life that an innocent man might be saved to his family.'

'The ladies now claimed the attention of the two gentlemen. Mrs. M'Culloch was lying in a swoon, pale as death, on her husband's bosom; Miss M'Culloch was sitting with uplifted hands, her eyes fixed, and her beautiful lips wide apart. the statue of suspense, uncertain as yet whether or not her father's life was safe. That was a happy morning for the M'Cullochs, happier than if no such danger had ever hung over them. A pardon was readily obtained from the

Secretary of State's office, and M'Culloch was released.

When Gillespie's trial came on, there was no one witness against him but himself; but he delivered a plain unvarnished tale, which amply sufficed for his own condemnation. He had been prompted to the dreadful deed by a jealousy but too well founded; and it appeared that the Mrs. Anne Gillespie, alluded to in an earlier part of our tale, was his wife, and the unhappy cause of the murder. When asked by the judge what had become of his wife, he answered: 'My wife! what is tat to you, or to the present cause? Tat was my concern, not yours. You may try to find out, but you never will till the day of doom.'

In the course of a few weeks, Pheader Gillespie suffered the just penalty of his offence, universally regretted, however, on account of the principles which had urged him to make confession of the deed.

A Spanish Kiss

CURVES of cheek and throat, and shadow of loose hair—the dark flash of dark eyes under the silk of black lashes—a passing vision light as a dream of summer—the sweet temptations of seventeen years' grace—womanhood at its springtime, when the bud is bursting through the blossom—the patter of feet that hardly touch ground in their elastic movement—the light loose dress, moulding its softness upon the limbs beneath it, betraying much, suggesting the rest; an apparition seen only for a moment passing through the subdued light of a vine-shaded window, briefly as an object illuminated by lightning—yet such a moment may well be recorded by the guardian angels of men's lives.

"Croyez vous ça?" suddenly demands a metallically sonorous voice at the other side of the table.

"Pardon!—qu'est ce que c'est?" asks the stranger, in the tone of one suddenly awakened, internally annoyed at being disturbed, yet anxious to appear deeply interested. They had been talking of Japan—and the traveler, suddenly regaining the clue of the conversation, spoke of a bath-house at Yokohama, and of strange things he had seen there, until the memory of the recent vision mingled fantastically with recollections of the Japanese bathing-house, and he sank into another reverie, leaving the untasted cup of black coffee before him to mingle its dying aroma with the odour of the cigarettes.

For there are living apparitions that affect men more deeply than fancied visits from the world of ghosts;—numbing respiration momentarily, making the blood to gather about the heart like a great weight, hushing the voice to a murmur, creating an indescribable oppression in the throat—until nature seeks relief in a strong sigh that fills the lungs with air again and cools for a brief moment the sudden fever of the veins. The vision may endure but an instant—seen under a gleam of sunshine, or through the antiquated gateway

one passes from time to time on his way to the serious part of the city; yet that instant is enough to change the currents of the blood, and slacken the reins of the will, and make us deaf and blind and dumb for a time to the world of SOLID FACT. The whole being is momentarily absorbed, enslaved by a vague and voiceless desire to touch her, to kiss her, to bite her.

The lemon-gold blaze in the west faded out; the blue became purple; and in the purple the mighty arch of stars burst into illumination, with its myriad blossoms of fire white as a woman's milk. A Spanish officer improved a momentary lull in the conversation by touching a guitar, and all eyes turned toward the musician, who suddenly wrung from his instrument the nervous, passionate, semi-barbaric melody of a Spanish dance. For a moment he played to an absolutely motionless audience; the very waving of the fans ceased, the listeners held their breath. Then two figures glided through the vine-framed doorway and took their seats. One was the Vision of a few hours before—a type of semi-tropical grace, with the bloom of Southern youth upon her dark skin. The other immediately impressed the stranger as the ugliest little Mexican woman he had ever seen in the course of a long and experienced life.

She was grotesque as a Chinese image of Buddha, no taller than a child of ten, but very broadly built. Her skin had the ochre tint of new copper; her forehead was large and disagreeably high; her nose flat; her cheek-bones very broad and prominent; her eyes small, deeply set, and gray as pearls; her mouth alone, small, passionate, and pouting, with rather thick lips, relieved the coarseness of her face. Although so compactly built, she had no aspect of plumpness or fleshiness:—she had the physical air of one of those little Mexican fillies which are all nerve and sinew. Both women were in white; and the dress of the little Mexican was short enough to expose a very pretty foot and well-turned ankle.

Another beautiful woman would scarcely have diverted the stranger's attention from the belle of the party that night; but that Mexican was so infernally ugly, and so devilishly comical, that he could not remove his eyes from her grotesque little face. He could not help remarking that her smile was pleasing if not pretty, and her teeth white as porcelain; that there was a strong, good-natured originality about her face, and that her uncouthness was only apparent, as she was the most accomplished dancer in the room. Even the belle's movements seemed heavy compared with hers; she appeared to dance as lightly as the humming-bird moves from blossom to blossom. By and by he found to his astonishment that this strange creature could fascinate without beauty and grace, and play coquette without art; also that her voice had pretty bird tones in it; likewise that the Spanish captain was very much interested in her, and determined to monopolize her as much as possible for the rest of the evening. And the stranger felt oddly annoyed thereat; and sought to console himself by the reflection that she was the most fantastically ugly little creature he had seen in his whole life. But for some mysterious reason consolation refused to come. "Well, I am going back to Honduras to-morrow," he

thought—"and there thoughts of women will give me very little concern."

"I protest against this kissing," cried the roguish host in a loud voice, evidently referring to something that had just taken place in the embrasure of the farther window. *"On fait venir l'eau dans la bouche!* Monopoly is strictly prohibited. *Our* rights and feelings must be taken into consideration." Frenzied applause followed. What difference did it make?—they were the world's Bohemians—here to-day, there to-morrow!—before another moonrise they would be scattered west and south;—the ladies ought to kiss them all for good luck.

So the kiss of farewell was given under the great gate, overhung by vine-tendrils drooping like a woman's hair love-loosened.

The beauty's lips shrank from the pressure of the stranger's;—it was a fruitless phantom sort of kiss. *"Y yo, señor,"* cried the little Mexican, standing on tiptoe as she threw her arms about his neck. Everybody laughed except the recipient of the embrace. He had received an electric shock of passion which left him voiceless and speechless, and it seemed to him that his heart had ceased to beat.

Those carmine-edged lips seemed to have a special life of their own as of the gymnotus—as if crimsoned by something more lava-warm than young veins: they pressed upon his mouth with the motion of something that at once bites and sucks blood irresistibly but softly, like the great bats which absorb the life of sleepers in tropical forests;—there was something moist and cool and supple indescribable in their clinging touch, as of beautiful snaky things which, however firmly clasped, slip through the hand with boneless strength;—they could not themselves be kissed, because they mesmerized and mastered the mouth presented to them;—their touch for the instant paralyzed the blood, but only to fill its motionless currents with unquenchable fires as strange as of a tropical volcano, so that the heart strove to rise from its bed to meet them, and all the life of the man seemed to have risen to his throat only to strangle there in its effort at self-release. A feeble description, indeed; but how can such a kiss be described?

Six months later the stranger came back from Honduras, and deposited some small but heavy bags in the care of his old host. Then he called the old man aside, and talked long and earnestly and passionately, like one who makes a confession.

The landlord burst into a good-natured laugh. *"Ah, la drôle!—la vilaine petite drôle!* So she made you crazy, also? *Mon cher,* you are not the only one, *pardieu!* But the idea of returning here on account of one kiss, and then to be too late, after all! She is gone, my friend, gone. God knows where. Such women are birds of passage. You might seek the whole world and never find her; again, you might meet her when least expected. But you are too late. She married the guitarrista."

Zaida, Pearl-of-East

THE sky was full of gorgeous and transcendent hues, which the sun, prodigal of its beauties, lavishes on the land of morning, the ruby-tinted East. Now, at the close of a tropical day, it transformed the gray and rugged Sierras into a radiant fairy-land of pearly tints and molten gold, and rested on the bold, decided outlines of the Torres Bermejas, or Vermilion Towers, standing out in sharp relief against the violet heavens. In one of the gardens of the Alhambra, overlooking the golden-hued Darro, stood a Moorish maiden leaning upon the low wall which surrounded the enclosure, and, with veil thrown back, gazed out upon the landscape, breathing the balmy air which at length relieved the heat of day. The thick, dark leaves of a pomegranate-tree waved above her head, bending till their boughs encircled her face as with a garland; at her feet a flowering cactus, and near her, in gorgeous clusters, the rich, proud blossoms of the Eastern plants, among which, like a pale, sweet vision, the graceful lily upreared its slender stalk, and the gaudy tulip flaunted its rainbow tints, as if conscious of its finery. Thus surrounded, and with bright, glowing beauty of deep and vivid coloring, of warm and radiant lights, she might have been mistaken for Flora, the goddess of the morn, the fair guardian of the flowers. Yet a subtle melancholy was perceptible in her face, spite of the haughty, flashing eyes, unsoftened by any gleam of tenderness.

Hearing a step approach, she hastily concealed her face, nor raised her veil until a well-known voice addressed her:

"Zaida, my beloved, flower of the East, it is thy lover who disturbs thy reverie. Wherefore did I note that shade of sadness on thy radiant face?"

"Alas! Tarfe, my thoughts were of my country's ruin. What if the ancient walls of fair Granada should ever shelter yonder infidel invaders, and the crescent of the Prophet give place to his usurping symbol?"

"Dispel such evil forebodings, light of my life," replied the Moor. "Never shall those accursed Christians vanquish the sons of Islam. Bethink thee how our fathers fought and died; and shall we prove recreant to the trust they left us?"

"Nay, but our race hath fallen, and no more shall Granada witness those ancient deeds of valor."

"Thou wrongest us, fair Zaida; we are ever ready to strike a daring blow in behalf of the country we love so well."

"Allah be praised!" she cried vehemently; "had I been but a man, yonder would I speed to the very tents of the unbelievers, and hurl defiance in their midst."

"And it shall be done, pearl of the East. Ere to-morrow's sun hath sunk to rest, thy wish shall be accomplished inasmuch as it may be done in the person of thy lover. But I claim from thy fair hand a pledge of defiance which shall be left in the unbeliever's camp as token of my presence."

"Brave warrior, true son of Islam, receive from my hand this scarf I have worn, by which I declare to thee my interest in thy welfare."

He took the scarf of green tissue which she offered him, and pressed it to his lips with words of fervent gratitude.

"Behold our country!" she continued. "Beyond that deep and flowering ravine arises the dark fortress of the Albaycin; at its feet flows through vaulted bridges the warm-hued waters of the Darro; and yonder to our right like liquid silver winds the calm Xenil. O Tarfe! my beloved, behold our country, and deplore with me its downfall. Nerve thy heart with its beauty, and let the true believers combat in unison, that the infidel invader may never possess its mosques and towers."

"Fear not, dearest; never shall the unbelieving foe pollute with his miscreant tread the stronghold of our fathers, our ancient citadel."

"Allah aid thy hand! But now it weareth late, and I may not tarry longer. I pine and die, O Tarfe! within these gorgeous halls and incense-perfumed chambers. My soul is made for freedom and a proud and high career like thine, my warrior! I loathe the life I lead, and seem to breathe indeed the air of slavery. Farewell, beloved, the night approacheth!"

With tender words he left her to return to the royal walls of the palace, whilst he betook himself to prepare for the morrow's task.

Night had withdrawn her legions, and the morn, like a vanquished foe, raised her pale face and smiled on the sleeping woods, and plains, and mountains. The birds, the feathered choristers, awoke and chanted their early notes of praise, the trees shook the dew like sleep from off their leaves, and the flowers unfolded their dreamy, odorous petals; the streams went murmuring on, for even the tranquil night brings them no rest, and they heeded not that the opal Dawn had come out of the east, and the black-robed Night had passed away with stately step, gathering her treasures, the golden, burning stars, and the cool zephyrs, and myriad clouds. It was day upon the Vega, and from out the Alcazar gate rode a warrior of stern and stately mien. His figure was strong and firmly knit; his height, it seemed, somewhat above the medium size. His visor was still raised and displayed the swarthy face and fierce, black eyes of Tarfe the Moor. Mounted on a noble steed, he rode with grave and determined air, till at length, when the morning sun was shining on the walls and battlements which surrounded the Christian camp, he gave rein to his horse, and urged it with whip and spur to its utmost speed. As he approached the Christian lines he could perceive that all were astir; pages and squires, polishing their masters' armor or sharpening their flashing swords, sat without the tent, regardless of the early sun.

Settling himself firmly in his saddle, he rode at full gallop within the lines, and with all his force hurled at the wooden pavilion which served as the dwelling of the Queen a dart to which was attached a scarf of greenish tissue. Then, wheeling around, he dashed from the camp with lightning speed. Scarce had he reached the plain when a hundred of the noblest knights sprang to their saddles and galloped forth in pursuit. They followed him to the very gates of the beleaguered city, but the Alcazar opened to receive him ere lance or sword could reach him. He scarcely slackened his steed till, pausing at one of the gates of the Alham-

bra, he threw his bridle to a page, and, dismounting, entered with proud and joyous step.

In a hall adorned with barbaric splendor, golden vessels of burning incense, costly carvings, and draperies of silk and cloth of gold, he found the princess reclining on a divan. Kneeling before her, he exclaimed:

"Beauteous Zaida, beloved of my heart, thy lover has returned, but thy token waves upon the pavilion of the unbeliever's Queen!"

"Worthy art thou," she answered with proud exultation, "that the daughter of a hundred kings should hail thee as her lover. Thou, thou shalt uphold the failing fortunes of our race."

"Thy words, my Zaida, are to me as the nectar of the gods, as the songs of the dark-eyed houris. Unparalleled art thou in beauty, as in undaunted courage and devotion to thy country. I may not utter all that gratitude and love would teach me. Bright are thine eyes as the glowing diamond, fair art thou as the queenly rose. O fairest of thy race! behold at thy feet Tarfe, thy slave and servant!"

"Say, rather, my true warrior, dear to my heart as the glory of our country. Illustrious art thou among the men of our race, and Zaida thanks thee for this noble proof of thy love."

Continuing thus to converse in the extravagant style of the East, they passed on to the presence of Boabdil, the last Moorish sovereign of Granada.

Prominent among the pursuers of Tarfe was Hernan Perez del Pulgar, popularly known as "Him of the mighty deeds," one of the bravest and noblest of the chivalry of Spain. Finding the pursuit vain, he presented himself before the king.

"My liege," he said, bending the knee, "our chase hath been unsuccessful; wherefore I have come to crave from thee a boon."

"Name it, sir knight; we know of no boon which can be refused to 'Him of the mighty deeds.'"

"My King, I ask the privilege of avenging, in the manner which shall seem to me most fitting, this daring and audacious insult."

"It shall be as thou wilt, Pulgar; but bear in mind that Granada is still in the hands of the infidels, and risk not thy life in rash encounters. We have need of arms like thine."

"My sovereign, I thank thee," cried Pulgar joyously; "thou shalt find me not unfaithful to thy trust. Permit that I withdraw, that all may be arranged."

"Thou hast our leave," replied the monarch, "and may God speed thee in thy mission!"

Pulgar retired, but before returning to his tent he walked rapidly in the opposite direction for some distance, then paused, and seemed uncertain as to what course he should pursue; when forth from a tent, attended by one of her maidens, came a lady of tall and rather slight figure and graceful and elegant mien. Her small and shapely head and well-cut, beautiful features were shown to full advantage by the mantilla of lace which fell in heavy folds to her very feet. Pulgar started at the sight, and advanced eagerly.

"Lady," he began, "be not offended that thou seest me here; for Heaven hath surely granted me the boon of this brief meeting ere I depart."

"Thou speakest of near departure, sir

knight," replied the lady. "Whither goest thou?"

"Heardst thou not, fair lady, that a defying dart was hurled from the hands of an audacious Moor at the very pavilion of our Queen? At nightfall I go hence, that this outrage may be avenged."

"Nay, the tidings had not reached me. But wherefore," she continued, "do you valiant and redoubted knights, who have given to Spain such proofs of loyalty and valor, thus risk your lives in new and perilous encounters?"

"Thou art kind, fair lady, who would thus dissuade us from our enterprise. Yet had I boldly dared to hope that from thy lips I should have heard approval of my venture."

She was silent, and Pulgar continued:

"Have I, indeed, been overbold in aught that I have said or done?"

"Not so, brave knight, for from the lips of woman should ever proceed the praise of valor and its inspiration. Yet do I lack the spirit which could urge to deeds of danger."

"Knowest thou not, dear lady," he proceeded in a lower tone, "that knights, when riding forth to war or combat, ever seek their guerdon in the smiles of those they love? Give me, I implore thee, some sign or token which I may bear upon my breast, the which, if, through storm and danger, I return to hear approval from thy lips, I may lay at thy dear feet; or if, in Heaven's wise decrees, this night should be my last, shall be sent hither to thee, dyed in the crimson life-blood of this heart that beats for thee."

"I know not what to say, brave knight. If words of mine may urge to glorious deed, thou hast them; though, alas! my coward heart would fain dissuade from scenes of strife and peril. Bear with thee, nevertheless, this crimson ribbon, as thou desirest some token, and with it my poor prayers that Heaven may defend thee."

"For thy sweet sake," he answered, "I will now go forth to battle in a holy cause. More than I have said I dare not say till I return a victor; and if that may not be—" He paused, then added quickly: "keep place for me within thy heart as one who was, who had been ever, thy true knight."

He was gone before her lips could frame some farewell words, and she retired, sad and troubled at the remembrance of his danger. Pulgar hastened to his tent, and, summoning a few of his tried and trusty comrades, he revealed to them his plan.

"By my honor as a Christian knight," cried Aguilera, "I deem it little short of madness. What folly hath possessed thy brain, Pulgar, to risk thy life and ours so thoughtlessly?"

"Since when do Spanish nobles prefer life to honor?" answered Pulgar haughtily.

"We may bethink us of some other means," added an older knight; "to venture thus within the walls of the infidel stronghold were surely but a tempting of Providence."

"I came not hither," cried Pulgar with flashing eyes, "to seek for counsel. To ye, my comrades, I have made known my resolve; wherefore ask I simply for your aid, and that ye bear me company unto the walls of the beleaguered city. Failing this, I go alone."

"That shall never be, Del Pulgar," cried the knights in eager chorus. "The

danger that thou darest we shall also dare."

The time was fixed for that very night, therefore they all retired to hold themselves in readiness; and though each one knew that the golden sunlight of the morrow might shine upon his mangled corpse, not a man drew back, but girded himself with stern determination to do or die. Having secured a Moslem deserter as their guide, the little band directed their course across the dusky plain. The night was bleak and stormy. The howling wind swept down in loud and boisterous gusts from the dwelling of the storm-king in the rugged fastnesses of the dark Sierras and over the desolate Vega. Not a star lit their way as noiselessly they sped on through the night and through the darkness, Pulgar and his thirteen companions. The trees waved their dark branches as they stood silently along their paths like ghosts of midnight sentries, who uttered no challenge, demanded no password. At length they reached the gates of the Moorish city, and it was decided that but four of his companions should scale the walls with Del Pulgar. Followed, therefore, by Bedmar, Aguilera, Montemayor, and Baena, they succeeded in effecting an entrance to the city. Drawing their mantles closely around them and firmly grasping their swords, they advanced through the quiet streets of the Moorish stronghold, so famed in song and story. The dim light of the lantern showed the quaint old buildings with their rare and curious carvings and graceful, curving minarets, while through the distance the clock in some public hall or mosque noted with solemn, warning strokes the flight of time. Before the principal mosque they paused at a signal from their leader, and Pulgar drew from beneath his cloak a parchment scroll. Holding aloft the lantern, he showed to his astonished companions, to whom he had not confided the details of his plan, the words of the *Ave Maria* inscribed in blue letters on a dark-red ground, followed by a formal dedication of the spot to the worship of God and the honor of Our Lady. With one accord they knelt and fervently repeated the old, old prayer first uttered in the dawning of the world's history by heaven-taught, angel lips.

"My trusty comrades," said Del Pulgar as they rose, "Mary, Queen of the Angels, hath thus far been our shield and defence. She it was who prompted this deed, and unto her I give the glory of our enterprise."

With these words he reverently kissed the scroll and fastened it securely, using his dagger as a nail, to the wooden carving of the principal entrance; then taking from one of his companions a package of combustibles with which each had been provided, he placed it close to the wood-work of another door, and, having ignited it, turned, followed by his comrades, from the spot.

"To the Alcariceria,* true and loyal knights!" he cried. "For God, Our Lady, and for Spain!"

They had almost reached it when they discovered that Montemayor, to whom the light had been confided, had through carelessness suffered it to become extinguished, which so enraged Del Pul-

* The Alcariceria was a district of Granada entirely devoted to the manufacture of silk, and was considered one of the wealthiest portions of the city.

gar that he aimed a blow with his sword at the unlucky youth, but Bedmar interposed.

"Spare the youth!" he cried, "and by my faith, in briefer space than thou canst think, I will bring thither fire which shall ignite a thousand cities."

He rushed back to the burning mosque, already surrounded by an alarmed and excited multitude, and, seizing a brand, hastened to rejoin his comrades, whom he found engaged in a desperate encounter with the city guard. They succeeded with great difficulty in reaching the point at which they had entered, fighting their way to the very last, and leaving the ground strewn with the corpses of their opposers. Once without the walls, they mounted their steeds and soon regained the camp in safety, though much exhausted and bearing many a wound. They were received with great joy, and ushered by an eager throng into the presence of their sovereigns.

"Advance, sir knight," said the gracious Isabella. "'He of the mighty deed' hath this day surpassed his former feats in noble and generous daring. What guerdon can requite such an exploit as this?"

"Thy favor, gracious Queen, is full and ample guerdon for all true knights."

"I mind me, gallant Pulgar," said she, lowering her tone, "of a boon thou didst crave some little time ago. Perchance thou knowest how thy Queen may recompense thy deed of heroic valor."

"Aught that I can say, my sovereign, but poorly expresses Pulgar's heartfelt gratitude," he replied, catching the import of her words.

With one of her beaming smiles she dismissed him to make way for his comrades in the gallant exploit. To each of them was granted a large portion of land in the newly conquered territory, and to Pulgar the additional privilege of being buried in the new cathedral which was to replace the mosque of Granada. The day passed in general rejoicing throughout the Christian camp, while perchance the victor sought approval in the smiling eyes of his gentle and beloved Beatrix.

Within the walls of the beleaguered city, from gate to gate, from tower to tower, consternation and disorder prevailed. The mosque was in ashes, the city threatened, and the streets and thoroughfares strewn with the corpses of its hapless defenders. The story of Pulgar and his four companions was at first not generally believed, but many witnesses attested its truth. The King held council with his wisest and bravest warriors. Prominent among them was Tarfe, whom he had destined as the husband of the fair Zaida, his youngest sister. Suddenly the doors were thrown open and admittance craved for the youthful princess. Alone and unattended, arrayed in her richest robes, she advanced, and, bending profoundly before the throne, she partly drew aside her veil and spoke thus:

"Most mighty lord and royal brother, this is no time for idle pomp or ceremony, and I, though a woman, dare intrude myself upon thy councils, to ask what may be done when our very lives are threatened and the temple of our fathers laid in ashes."

"Allah is Allah, and Mahomet is his prophet," replied Boabdil. "Bethink thee, sister, that it has been written in the Book of Fate such evil should befall the sons of Islam."

"But have ye agreed as to how ye may avenge the wrong, and teach the insolent foe he warreth not with cravens?"

"Be calm, my sister, and hearken to my words," replied the monarch. "We have been pleased to assemble in council the bravest of our warriors, lovers of the Moslem cause, and true followers of Mahomet; therefore, I pray thee, concern not thyself with what thou canst not aid."

Forth from the group of warriors stepped the gallant Tarfe. Prostrate before the King, he exclaimed:

"Most redoubted lord, and commander of the faithful, permit that I sustain this day the honor of the Moslem cause. I will ride forth and dare to single combat any of their bravest Christian knights."

"Now Allah be praised!" cried the King. "The council is ended. Warriors, ye may retire. Tarfe shall be the avenger of his people!" The monarch then withdrew, followed by the band of Moslems, and Tarfe was left alone in the presence of his beloved.

"Tarfe," she said in a voice of thrilling sweetness, "once more wouldst thou risk thy life for my sake in the cause of our well-loved country. Its glory hath not fallen, its fortunes are not lost, whilst such as thee are left unto Granada."

"Even so, delight of my heart," said he; "once more will I go forth to vent my hatred on our common foes through love of thee. If, indeed, I live to return, lily of thy people, then may I, with proud and rapturous joy, dare to claim that beauteous hand, my loved Zaida; and if I die, trust me, peerless jewel of Granada, it shall be with honor."

"And the Koran promises thee, my warrior, a paradise of lasting delights, where I will rejoin thee when the appointed hour hath come. But if thou returnest, this hand, this heart which loves thee e'en as it burns with hatred of our foes, shall be thine own, and together we shall recall the ancient glories of our race, and seek to inspire each Islamite with fiery courage and undying hate of the Christian name. Go! I can send thee forth in such a cause without one tear."

"But now, Zaida," resumed her lover mournfully, "now hath come the moment of farewell. It may, indeed, be written in the book of doom that I shall look upon thy face no more. O beauteous maiden, pearl of the dawn! remember how I loved thee, should these lips ne'er speak again the eager tale of hope and passion. Farewell! Thy lover goeth forth; victory or death is now before him."

He rushed from the room, and, hastening to the mosque, removed the scroll which had been placed there by the heroic Pulgar. In the broad glare of noon he rode forth again from the Alcazar gateway. The sun was shining down with fierce and withering beams; not a ripple was upon the waters, nor a shiver among the trees. The dusty and unprotected Vega was a toilsome path on such a day, yet Tarfe seemed unconscious of the heat and dust. He wended his way slowly, and turned now and again a backward glance on the dark walls and towers of the Alhambra, the gloomy fortress of the Albaycin, or fixed his gaze upon the waters of the Darro as he passed beside its flowering banks.

Did some foreshadowings of his fate gleam like a prophecy from beyond the boundary that divides thought from matter? Were it so, there was none to whom he might communicate his thoughts, and he passed on across the sun-scorched Vega, till once more he reached the Christian lines. He rode slowly up and down before the walls, the now famous scroll of the *Ave Maria* affixed to his horse's tail, and boldly defied any Christian knight to single combat. Intense excitement prevailed within the camp. Pulgar was absent, but every knight was eager to accept the challenge and sally forth to combat with the Moor. But the King was deaf to all their entreaties.

"Spain has need of ye, my nobles," he declared—"has need of stout hearts and strong arms in the final struggle. I forbid ye, one and all, to expose your lives in a quarrel so vain; for well have ye proved your dauntless valor on many a hard-fought field."

From the group which surrounded the throne rushed forth a youth of slender and fragile form.

"My sovereign," he cried imploringly, "let me ride forth, and in Our Lady's cause win my spurs of knighthood. I pray thee pardon my temerity; but these brave knights, my liege, have fought and bled for Spain, and I—"

"It may not be, brave youth—the boon I denied to stronger arms may not be thine; but in thy request thou hast shown the warlike and undaunted spirit of thy house. Content thee, boy; a fitting occasion shall be given thee ere long to win thy spurs."

Reluctantly rising, the youth withdrew, but, in place of submitting to the King's command, he slipped away, and, donning his armor, rode hastily forth from the camp.

"Now Heaven forgive me!" he exclaimed, "for my disobedience to our royal master, and aid me in the coming contest."

When Tarfe beheld the boyish figure of his adversary, he was at first inclined to refuse his challenge.

"Return, rash youth," he said, "and know that Tarfe maketh war on men."

"Dost thou refuse my challenge, Moor? Then will I brand thee as a coward and a braggart. Seize thy lance and stand upon thy guard, or, by my faith, I'll charge upon thee."

Seeing that the boy was determined to encounter him, the Moor put his lance in rest, and soon the struggle began, and in the first course the Moor tottered in his saddle. The combat was long and severe. Lances were shivered, shields broken, and at length horses and riders rolled together in the dust. Meanwhile, from the walls of the encampment its progress was watched with eager interest by the Christian host.

"St. Iago to the rescue! . . . Holy Virgin! he is wavering. . . . By my halidome, the Moor totters! . . . Their blood flows fast! . . . Queen of Heaven assist him! . . . They fall! they are unhorsed!"

These and such like exclamations broke from the Christian lines, till the combatants rolled to the ground and were lost in a thick cloud of dust. A moment of suspense ensued, and then the youth was seen holding aloft the severed head of the Moorish warrior. A deafening cheer arose from the beholders, while the victor, holding the bleeding head and the scroll, which he

had unfastened from the horse, rode slowly towards the lines. In the rejoicing which followed the King forgot his resentment at the disobedience of the youth.

"Forgive him," urged the Queen—"forgive the unknown knight who hath this day, in Our Lady's honor, braved even the displeasure of his king."

"He is forgiven," replied the monarch; "such deed as his had wiped away a hundred faults. Advance, brave champion," he continued, as the youth appeared amid the enthusiastic plaudits of the crowd. "Permit us to behold the conqueror in a noble fray."

He raised his visor and disclosed the boyish features of De la Vega, the King's favorite page. Then burst from the multitude a thunder of applause—

"The stormy cheer man gives to Glory on her high career,"

that loud, continuous, and tumultuous applause which thrills the heart and stirs the blood; sounds which the treacherous wind wafted over the Vega's plain to the walls of the Moorish city.

"Pardon, my liege, pardon!" murmured the youth, kneeling at the feet of the King with the trophies of his victory.

"Thou art pardoned, gallant youth!" replied the King. "The blood of yonder Moor hath washed away even fault so grave as disobedience to our royal word. Tomorrow, after sunrise, thou shalt receive the spurs of knighthood."

Queen Isabella extended her hand for him to kiss.

"Receive, brave descendant of a valiant race, the thanks of thy Queen"; and she added, unfastening a jewelled brooch from her robe: "Wear this poor bauble in remembrance of thy first combat in a glorious cause."

He kissed her hand, murmuring some broken words of gratitude.

"Tell me, fair youth," she continued, smiling, "what damsel in our train may boast allegiance from so true a knight as thou hast proved thyself?"

"Thus far, my sovereign," he replied, "I combat in the cause of Mary, Mother of God; none other claims my devoirs."

"A high and holy cause is thine," said Isabella, deeply touched; "may she requite thee for thy heroic espousal of her cause to-day!"

Scarcely had the early morning sun appeared above the horizon when a vast assemblage of bishops and clergy, knights and ladies, pages and esquires, were gathered together to witness the investiture of the Christian champion with the order of knighthood. Amid a breathless silence, he advanced to the foot of the throne, and when Ferdinand, proclaiming him a knight, exclaimed, "Arise, Sir Garcilaso de la Vega! the faithful, brave, and fortunate," renewed acclamations rent the air, while nobles and ladies pressed eagerly forward to greet him under his new and well-won title.

It was night again in the Moorish city; the wind was murmuring and sighing in the trees, the plain was still and cold, the placid rivers flowed black and drear, and the jewels in Night's royal mantle appeared slowly, one by one, as the wan twilight faded. Afar o'er the dark fortress of the Albaycin the moon was slowly rising to her chair of regal state, just one faint portion visible from behind the envious clouds. Amid the odorous richness of the flow-

ers, in the balmy freshness of the evening air, stood Zaida, awaiting the return of her valiant lover. Did no whisper come through the sighing trees to warn her that he for whom she waited would come no more? At last she heard, through the still night air, the tramping of horses, and with an eager, feverish impatience she waited, while through the dense darkness she could hear the sound come nearer and nearer. She knew not that they were bearing to her anxious, hoping heart the tidings that should bid it hope no more. Through the quiet streets they bore her lover, who had gone forth at noon with the fiery heart of youth burning with hatred towards the people of God, enshrouded in more than Egyptian darkness, and had perished thus in an unholy cause. As they passed within the encircling battlements of the Alhambra, the moon emerged through the affrighted clouds, from behind the buttressed tower, and climbed, with majestic step, to her throne of sovereignty over the marshalled legions of the purple night. Zaida hastily entered the palace, and stood awaiting her lover at the head of the broad, marble staircase, leading to the great hall of the Alhambra. She paused in the shadow of an oriel window, through which the moon, unfettered by the latticed bars, shed its pale beams on her expectant face, on the dark stairway, the mail-clad forms advancing, and on the heavy velvet pall which covered a funeral bier. With one wild cry of anguish she sprang forward. "Who bear ye with such pomp and honor?" cried she, addressing the chief of the band. "What hero has fallen? What prince is no more?"

The moonbeams fell softly, pityingly around her as the chief replied: "We bear to the presence of the King the body of the illustrious Tarfe."

They passed on, not recognizing the Princess; but she detained them not, remaining silent and motionless as a statue. After a moment she followed them into the presence of the King, and, when the corpse was laid at his feet, she threw herself upon it and broke into a storm of passionate wailing.

"Star of thy race, thou art set; thy light is quenched in the darkness of death, and woe is me that I, thy beloved, may not follow thee beyond the grave! This, then, is our meeting, Tarfe, my beloved! Thy Zaida, who would have been thy bride, mourns thee in anguish and desolation. Dost thou not hear? Zaida speaks!"

But, alas! the ears that had heard with such joy her words of love were closed to all earthly sounds, and the lips that had breathed such passionate devotion would open no more on earth. She might not even gaze on the familiar features, even when Death, the sternest of conquerors, had chained them to fixed and absolute repose. She dared not draw aside the pall which mercifully concealed the headless trunk of her hapless lover. They drew her gently away from the corpse of him who had passed for ever out of her life into the unbroken silence of the grave. Thus were these two hearts, which a bond of love, of passionate hatred for their common foe, and of deep devotion to their country, had united so closely, parted now for ever "far as death severs life." Love and hatred, and the thousand mysteries of the human heart, were over for him, and his arm of might would strike no more its potent

blow in an unholy cause. Henceforward Zaida appeared not in council or at festival. Sometimes in the dim hour of twilight she was seen, in heavy robes of mourning, wandering through the flowering paths of her favorite gardens, recalling, perchance, his words of passionate tenderness and unholy resentment; reflecting, it may be, with remorseful pity, that her indomitable pride and fiery hatred of the Christian cause had urged him to his doom. Communing thus with the past, gazing on the towers and streams of her beloved Granada, only as links which bound her to departed joys, she mourned no more the downfall of her country, nor dreamed bright dreams of the regeneration of her race. Her thoughts, her hopes, ever pointed onward through the misty, uncertain years to what her vague and shadowy belief showed her as the sunrise land of infinite joy, where, on the flowering plains of the Prophet's Paradise, the lover of her youth awaited her, the warrior to whom the Koran promised that immortal bliss. Alas! when even the visions of the world above are phantoms like unto the pale, brief joys that lure our hearts while here below. Alas! when 'tis but the Koran's fancied Paradise of sensual delights that deludes the weary watcher.

On the same night that witnessed Zaida's passionate grief Del Pulgar breathed his vows of love in the tender moonlight with the waving shadows of the trees beneath the lovers' feet.

"Sweet lady," he whispered, "thou who hast cheered me through the stormy path of war, hear the prayer of thine unworthy knight. Bind thyself to me, I pray thee, by true and lasting ties, that when thy soldier goes forth again to battle the thought of thee may cheer him through its perils. Say, what shall be his fate, gentle lady of my heart?"

She answered not, and he continued:

"The King and Queen consent that I should urge my suit; therefore, wilt thou deny me? Speak but a word, beloved! Tell me, wilt thou share my fate and be a warrior's bride?"

"Ay," she replied with sudden courage. "I will be thy bride—thine, through joy and sorrow, till death do us part."

Then even the attendant maiden who stood apart perceived by the bright moonlight the glow of joy which lit the warrior's face. Bending low, he touched her fingers with his lips, as he answered solemnly:

"O thou to whom my vows are paid, may Heaven aid me to prove worthy of thy faith and love!"

The moon smiled and cast a flood of glory round them like the joy which filled their hearts; the night-wind whispered through the trees, as the greetings of long-lost dear ones, and the stars seemed to glow and burn in the night's purple mantle, as the lovers lingered, exchanging vows which bound them in endless union. Even thus shone the radiant moon on the Moorish maiden's solemn tryst with her cold, dead lover, as on the glowing looks and sunny smiles of the Christian damsel's glad betrothal; gleaming down with equal light on parting and meeting, on the hopeless, despairing grief of the one, and the hopeful, loving joy of the other.

One month later the nuptials of Hernan Perez del Pulgar with the fair and gentle lady of his choice were celebrated with great splendor and rejoicing,

in all the pomp and magnificence of the olden time; and in the joy of the hour was forgotten, for a brief season, the final, hard-fought struggle which was to wrest for ever the kingdom of Granada from the power of the Moors, and crown the Spanish arms with lasting honor.

Down through the long night of the ages tradition has preserved the legend of the *Ave Maria*, and in the cabins of the peasantry, or by the midnight watchfires of the muleteers, is told or chanted in rude verse the tale of how the gallant Pulgar fired by night the ancient Moorish mosque, and affixed thereto the parchment scroll with the ever-blessed words of the *Ave Maria*.

Crown of Navarre

Manfred, King of Navarre, was one of the most cruel and sanguinary princes of his age. Altogether unworthy of the name of king, there was nothing sacred in his eyes, nothing that seemed to restrain him in his ferocious career. He was never known to evince marks of pleasure, except where rapine and violation attended upon his steps. This unnatural disposition he more particularly indulged towards those who had most essentially served him, until, unable longer to endure the extreme severity of his yoke, his own nobles rose up in arms and excited the people to revolt. The signal being once given, they rushed forward in crowds towards the palace, in order to satiate their vengeance upon the spot. Incapable of making head against the wrath of his exasperated people, the sense of his past crimes suddenly smote upon the soul of the monarch, and he stood for a moment the image of anguish and despair; but the tidings of fate bursting louder and louder on his ear, he recollected a secret staircase which led to the back of his palace, and snatching up the young prince, his son, by Queen Altilia, a daughter of the King of Spain, he attempted to escape from the palace, already enveloped in flames. His hair, his royal mantle, and even his features, were scorched with the excessive heat; but the child, whom he had carefully wrapped in a flannel gown, escaped unhurt. In this state he succeeded, in a quarter where the assailants were but few, in making his way beyond the precincts of the palace, and at length, after infinite risks, he passed the frontiers of his own dominions. With slow and painful footsteps he then proceeded, begging alms by the way, from country to country, having exchanged his royal garments for a pauper's dress, and wishing yet afraid to die. His exasperated subjects meeting neither with him nor his son, whose name was Vitrio, concluded that they had both perished in the flames, and immediately proceeded to elevate to the throne his brother Aldobrandino, a wise and temperate prince, who proved himself worthy of their choice.

Manfred, in the meanwhile, continued to traverse various regions with his little boy, who sometimes walked at his side, and sometimes was borne in his father's arms. encountering unnum-

bered perils and deprivations, and stung with remorse at the recollection of his past enormities. Drooping at length under the weight of years and infirmities, he arrived at Sienna, where he applied for admission into the public hospital, and was charitably received. Finding himself here approaching the termination of his days, while his poor son, Vitrio, stood weeping by his side, he entreated the governor and some other gentlemen of the city to visit him before he expired. Several persons having complied with this request, King Manfred, turning towards the boy with tears in his eyes, addressed him as follows:—"Behold, my child, the well-merited punishment of cruelty and sin! Behold me, a lone and banished man, perishing of want, as you have frequently witnessed during our long and painful pilgrimage. It is my wish before I leave you to reveal the history of our birth and name, for you are nobly born, and some time you may perhaps profit by a knowledge of the truth. My name is Manfred, the tyrant of Navarre, and you are the offspring of my queen, Altilia, daughter of King Severus of Spain. I saved you, at imminent risk, from the flames kindled by an indignant people in order to envelope us in the ruins of our own palace. Believing us to have perished in the flames, my brother was elevated to the vacant throne, and I became a wretched exile, suffering under the incessant attacks of remorse, poverty, and despair. But I have to beseech you, my son, that you will obey me in what I am about to request;—that you will ever bear in mind those precepts of your ancestors which I myself so unhappily violated or neglected, and thus avoid the horror of being surrounded by the threatening arms of an injured and exasperated people. Imprint, then, the four following maxims upon your memory. In the first place, never abandon the old path for the new; secondly, never attach yourself to a woman whom you may not lawfully call your own; thirdly, marry no woman till you have first seen her, and found her nobility of birth to be worthy of sharing your high rank; fourthly, never strike your enemy until you have first thrice drawn your sword and thrice sheathed it in the scabbard." Then, having taken a tender leave of his son, and, fully sensible of his late crimes, received the sacrament and reconciled himself to our holy Church, he turned himself upon his side and expired. During this scene the surrounding spectators were bathed in tears, but their grief was lost in the deeper lamentations of the unhappy youth, who wept over his father as the first and the last friend he had in the world. "Whither shall I go? Where shall I seek a refuge now?" he cried. "My dear, dear father, thou hast left me without hope or stay!" But some gentlemen of Sienna, tearing him almost forcibly from the body, caused the deceased to be honourably interred at the public expense; nor could his son have received more ample proofs of regard had he been the immediate successor to a throne. For the noblest Siennese families invited him to their houses, and in a short time they selected a deputation of gentlemen to accompany him into the kingdom of his grandfather, and to bear witness to the decease of Manfred and the manner in which he had eluded the vigilance of his people. He was welcomed by King

Severus with the utmost kindness, the Siennese ambassadors receiving also public testimony of his approbation of their conduct in a variety of rich donations to grace their return.

Pleased with the young prince's conduct and disposition, the king brought him up at his own court, and when he had reached his sixteenth year, he bestowed upon him the hand of one of the most beautiful princesses of Portugal, celebrating his espousals with the bright Cillenia in the most pompous and magnificent manner. Not very long after this Vitrio was seized with a violent fever, and in order to facilitate his recovery he made a pious vow to visit as a pilgrim the holy cities of Rome and Jerusalem. On his convalescence, therefore, he entreated the king to permit him to fulfil his vow, which he doubted not had restored him so far to health. This, with some difficulty, being at length granted by the king, who tenderly loved him, the invalid set out, loaded with rich presents and attended by a noble train. Having visited Rome and made the due offerings at the holy shrine, he departed for Ancona where he hired a noble galley to convey him to the port of Baruti, situated not very far from Jerusalem. He was borne by prosperous breezes until he arrived near the isle of Cyprus, when a sudden tempest arising, the vessel was driven off the coast of Syria, and being dashed to pieces on the rocks, about twenty of the passengers were saved and captured by the neighbouring inhabitants. But Vitrio, with several of his companions, had first escaped to shore, and continued his flight during the whole of that day along the coast, without any nutriment, until they were overpowered by fatigue. The following morning, meeting with some wild berries, they recruited their exhausted strength, and were fortunate enough after long toil to reach a spring of water near the shore, but so dark and turbid as to be extremely nauseous to the taste. Vitrio then threw himself, overwhelmed with sorrow and weariness, upon the sands, desirous of obtaining some repose. On seeing this, two of his attendants began to lament their unhappy fate, and, reproaching him with want of feeling in having paid no attention to them, they resolved to consult their own safety, and to abandon him as he lay. Awakening soon after, he arose and called them by their names, and, when those who remained faithful to him came forward, he besought them not to desert him; for he had dreamed that while he slept his companions had departed. Under the impression that they had all conspired to betray him, he now besought them most tenderly as friends and brothers that they would neither be ungenerous enough to injure him nor to abandon him to his fate. Thus addressing them, with tears in his eyes, he resumed his way; and about the middle of the day it so happened that he again fell in with the two cavaliers who had agreed to leave him. Weary with travelling along the shore, where nothing was found to satisfy the cravings of hunger and thirst, Vitrio determined to strike into the interior of the country. They soon afterwards arrived at a spot where two pathways met; one of which appeared new and spacious, the other untravelled and overgrown with briars and thorns. Vitrio, here recollecting the advice

given him by his father, never to abandon the old path to walk in the new, came to the resolution of persevering in the thorny way. Upon observing this, the two cavaliers who had before abandoned him began to reproach him with his folly in persevering in a road which would certainly lead his companions into destruction. But Vitrio, deigning not to reply, pursued the path which he had chosen, followed by Lambrone and Gelso only, two of his attendants who still remained faithful to him. The sun had scarcely gone down before the latter travellers reached a large town called Rama, at a short distance from Zaffo, a place to which a great number of Christians used to resort. Gelso, who understood the language of the country, there procured provisions for their support, and the following day they arrived at Zaffo; while the two cavaliers who had traversed the great road, attended by the rest of the crew, were all surprised and cut off by banditti, with the exception of a single man, who brought tidings of their fate to Zaffo. In a few days they again resumed their journey, and had the good fortune to reach Jerusalem, where, after religiously observing their vows, they bent their way towards the sea-shore, and passing into Cyprus, the prince there fell sick, and was confined to his couch for the space of a year. When he recovered, his two faithful friends, Gelso and Lambrone, likewise fell sick, and died soon after. Vitrio shed many tears over their graves, and it was long before he again recovered sufficient fortitude to resume his way whithersoever his destiny might lead. But tears availed him nothing, and, having exhausted his other resources, he betook himself to a few jewels, which he disposed of to the best advantage, and proceeded slowly towards Nicozia. He there remained some time in the court of King Troilus, who, pleased with his gentle manners, no less than with the story of his adventures, granted him a refuge from the assaults of Fortune. But even here, alas! she did not long cease to persecute him; for a daughter of Theodore, lord of Arzuffo, becoming deeply enamoured of him, soon gave him to understand by secret messages that she had bestowed upon him her whole heart, and loved him more than herself. Again recollecting his father's instructions, not to attach himself to any woman but his lawful wife, Vitrio received her overtures with the utmost coldness, and at length began to avoid her presence in order to show his decided aversion to her suit. The consequences of this proceeding were soon felt by Vitrio, for the lady, indignant at his rejection of her advances, changed her love into the fiercest anger and disdain. In order to ensure a safe revenge, she gave orders to her nurse to deposit a case of jewellery under the young prince's couch; and the wicked old woman having obeyed her, the prince was immediately accused by the offended lady of having committed the theft. After enduring solitary confinement for the space of two years, he was sentenced to terminate his days upon the gallows. Now, it was an ancient custom of the island that every criminal condemned to death had the power of redeeming himself by the payment of two thousand bezants. But this unhappy youth had already expended all his resources in feeing the

judges, the advocates, and the courtiers, in order to obtain the exercise of their influence in a final appeal to the monarch. In fact, he was now completely destitute, and there was nothing left for him but to summon fortitude to die. His eyes were already bound, and he was fast approaching the scene of execution, when a beautiful maiden who had lately succeeded to a large inheritance observed him passing along, buried in the profoundest affliction. Taking compassion on his fate, and impelled by a tenderer feeling, she instantly offered the amount of the fine, and claimed at the same time the young man's deliverance, if he would consent to accept her as his spouse. It is impossible now to describe the mental struggles of the unfortunate youth, and we may justly estimate the magnanimity of his soul in hesitating as to a proposal of marriage, although the preservation of his life depended upon his acceptance of it. Even now he debated within himself whether to perish or to violate the commands of his holy religion by taking two wives. In this emergency he recollected the injunction of his father not to marry until he had seen the lady and ascertained her nobility of birth; and he therefore requested to see the maiden and to be informed as to her extraction. The bandage was removed from his eyes, and the officer, pointing out the lady, observed, "Behold the fair daughter of the merchant Palliodoro." On hearing these words, Vitrio, turning to the officers of justice, bade them lead on, for that he was content to suffer. "The crown of Navarre," he exclaimed, "must never sit upon the head of a merchant's daughter, however exalted a soul she may possess. Heaven, I trust, will grant her a better husband than I shall ever make her; and as for me, if it be well that I should escape, God will yet provide the means." Hearing these expressions, and beholding the firm and noble deportment of the prisoner, the chief officer despatched a messenger to the king, saying that the youthful stranger had refused the price of his redemption and the hand of the rich daughter of Palliodoro. The king then ordered Vitrio to be brought before him, and obtained from him a full confession of his previous history, of his long wanderings and sufferings after having fled with his father, and begged their bread in foreign lands. "Compassionate, then," continued Vitrio, "most noble prince, my strange and unhappy fortunes. Permit me not to suffer until my accusers have been again examined: you will find that I am innocent, and that I do not deserve to die. Your majesty will not, therefore, deny me that justice which I have not yet received." The two women being then brought into the presence of the king, and threatened with torture if they did not forthwith reveal the whole truth, immediately confessed the falsehood of the charge, and were condemned to perpetual imprisonment.

The monarch then commanded a noble vessel to be fitted out in order to convey the stranger to the shores of Spain. Returning his grateful thanks, Vitrio departed, and soon after landed in the territories of King Severus, and proceeded towards his court, reflecting on the results of his obedience to his dear father's precepts. It was just on the point of nightfall as he reached the outskirts of the royal palace, where,

giving his name to the astonished officers, who had long numbered him with the dead, he proceeded up the staircase and along the spacious galleries alone. The first object which he beheld on approaching the scene of his former pleasures and power was a lady caressing an infant in her arms, the same lady whom he had left so young, his own cherished and honoured bride. His first impulse was a feeling of jealousy, and, believing that she was caressing an adulterous offspring, he was on the point of unsheathing his sword and sacrificing them both to his revenge. But the memory of his father once more rushed into his mind. "Never," he exclaimed within himself, "strike your foe until you have thrice drawn your sword from its scabbard;" and he stood and gazed fearfully some moments at the lady and the child. The latter, startled at the glittering blade, ran screaming towards its mother, who sat with her face turned partly aside from her husband's view, crying out that a man was coming to kill him. "Sleep, sleep, little foolish one," replied his mother: "no man since my dear husband left me has ever passed this sad chamber-door." Catching the sound of these words, Vitrio, breathing a prayer of gratitude to his father's spirit, quickly sheathed his sword, and hearing his child repeating the name of mother, he rushed forward, and the next moment found them both clasped within his arms. His voice and features were still so familiar to the fancy of the princess that she knew him in a moment, and a sudden flood of joyous tears at once expressed and relieved the deep emotions of her breast. The tidings quickly spreading abroad, the prince was immediately introduced into the presence of the king, who received him as if he had recovered his own son. A general festival was in consequence proclaimed throughout the kingdom, and jousts and tournaments were celebrated. The King of Portugal, his father-in-law, demonstrated no less satisfaction at his return, which he evinced by the pomp and magnificence of his entertainments. In after years, Prince Vitrio succeeded to the throne of his grandfather, to which, before his decease, he added the sceptre of his uncle and of his wife's father, thus reigning over three several countries. He was blessed with a numerous progeny, and as he had always approved himself a fond and obedient son, he had the delight of embracing only wise and affectionate children.

Princess Bob

She was a Klamath Indian. Her title was, I think, a compromise between her claim as daughter of a chief, and gratitude to her earliest white protector, whose name, after the Indian fashion, she had adopted. "Bob" Walker had taken her from the breast of her dead mother at a time when the sincere volunteer soldiery of the California frontier were impressed with the belief that extermination was the manifest destiny of the Indian race. He had with difficulty restrained the noble zeal of his compatriots long enough to convince them that the exemption of one Indian baby would not invalidate this theory. And he took her to his home,—a pastoral clearing on the banks of the Salmon River,—where she was cared for after a frontier fashion.

Before she was nine years old, she had exhausted the scant kindliness of the thin, overworked Mrs. Walker. As a playfellow of the young Walkers she was unreliable; as a nurse for the baby she was inefficient. She lost the former in the trackless depths of a redwood forest; she basely abandoned the latter in an extemporized cradle, hanging like a chrysalis to a convenient bough. She lied and she stole,—two unpardonable sins in a frontier community, where truth was a necessity and provisions were the only property. Worse than this, the outskirts of the clearing were sometimes haunted by blanketed tatterdemalions with whom she had mysterious confidences. Mr. Walker more than once regretted his indiscreet humanity; but she presently relieved him of responsibility, and possibly of blood-guiltiness, by disappearing entirely.

When she reappeared, it was at the adjacent village of Logport, in the capacity of housemaid to a trader's wife, who, joining some little culture to considerable conscientiousness, attempted to instruct her charge. But the Princess proved an unsatisfactory pupil to even so liberal a teacher. She accepted the alphabet with great good-humor, but always as a pleasing and recurring novelty, in which all interest expired at the completion of each lesson. She found a thousand uses for her books and writing materials other than those known to civilized children. She made a curious necklace of bits of slate-pencil, she constructed a miniature canoe from the pasteboard covers of her primer, she bent her pens into fish-hooks, and tattooed the faces of her younger companions with blue ink. Religious instruction she received as good-humoredly, and learned to pronounce the name of the Deity with a cheerful familiarity that shocked her preceptress. Nor could her reverence be reached through analogy; she knew nothing of the Great Spirit, and professed entire ignorance of the Happy Hunting-Grounds. Yet she attended divine service regularly, and as regularly asked for a hymn-book; and it was only through the discovery that she had collected twenty-five of these volumes and had hidden them behind the woodpile, that her connection with

the First Baptist Church of Logport ceased. She would occasionally abandon these civilized and Christian privileges, and disappear from her home, returning after several days of absence with an odor of bark and fish, and a peace-offering to her mistress in the shape of venison or game.

To add to her troubles, she was now fourteen, and, according to the laws of her race, a woman. I do not think the most romantic fancy would have called her pretty. Her complexion defied most of those ambiguous similes through which poets unconsciously apologize for any deviation from the Caucasian standard. It was not wine nor amber colored; if anything, it was smoky. Her face was tattooed with red and white lines on one cheek, as if a fine-toothed comb had been drawn from cheek-bone to jaw, and, but for the good-humor that beamed from her small berry-like eyes and shone in her white teeth, would have been repulsive. She was short and stout. In her scant drapery and unrestrained freedom she was hardly statuesque, and her more unstudied attitudes were marred by a simian habit of softly scratching her left ankle with the toes of her right foot, in moments of contemplation.

I think I have already shown enough to indicate the incongruity of her existence with even the low standard of civilization that obtained at Logport in the year 1860. It needed but one more fact to prove the far-sighted political sagacity and prophetic ethics of those sincere advocates of extermination, to whose virtues I have done but scant justice in the beginning of this article. This fact was presently furnished by the Princess. After one of her periodical disappearances,—this time unusually prolonged,—she astonished Logport by returning with a half-breed baby of a week old in her arms. That night a meeting of the hard-featured serious matrons of Logport was held at Mrs. Brown's. The immediate banishment of the Princess was demanded. Soft-hearted Mrs. Brown endeavored vainly to get a mitigation or suspension of the sentence. But, as on a former occasion, the Princess took matters into her own hands. A few mornings afterwards, a wicker cradle containing an Indian baby was found hanging on the handle of the door of the First Baptist Church. It was the Parthian arrow of the flying Princess. From that day Logport knew her no more.

It had been a bright clear day on the upland, so clear that the ramparts of Fort Jackson and the flagstaff were plainly visible twelve miles away from the long curving peninsula that stretched a bared white arm around the peaceful waters of Logport Bay. It had been a clear day upon the sea-shore, albeit the air was filled with the flying spume and shifting sand of a straggling beach whose low dunes were dragged down by the long surges of the Pacific and thrown up again by the tumultuous trade-winds. But the sun had gone down in a bank of fleecy fog that was beginning to roll in upon the beach. Gradually the headland at the entrance of the harbor and the lighthouse disappeared, then the willow fringe that marked the line of Salmon River vanished, and the ocean was gone. A few sails still gleamed on the waters of the bay; but the advancing fog wiped them out one by one, crept across the steel-

blue expanse, swallowed up the white mills and single spire of Logport, and, joining with reinforcements from the marshes, moved solemnly upon the hills. Ten minutes more and the landscape was utterly blotted out; simultaneously the wind died away, and a death-like silence stole over sea and shore. The faint clang, high overhead, of unseen brent, the nearer call of invisible plover, the lap and wash of undistinguishable waters, and the monotonous roll of the vanished ocean, were the only sounds. As night deepened, the far-off booming of the fog-bell on the headland at intervals stirred the thick air.

Hard by the shore of the bay, and half hidden by a drifting sand-hill, stood a low nondescript structure, to whose composition sea and shore had equally contributed. It was built partly of logs and partly of driftwood and tarred canvas. Joined to one end of the main building—the ordinary log-cabin of the settler—was the half-round pilot-house of some wrecked steamer, while the other gable terminated in half of a broken whale-boat. Nailed against the boat were the dried skins of wild animals, and scattered about lay the flotsam and jetsam of many years' gathering,—bamboo crates, casks, hatches, blocks, oars, boxes, part of a whale's vertebræ, and the blades of sword-fish. Drawn up on the beach of a little cove before the house lay a canoe. As the night thickened and the fog grew more dense, these details grew imperceptible, and only the windows of the pilot-house, lit up by a roaring fire within the hut, gleamed redly through the mist.

By this fire, beneath a ship's lamp that swung from the roof, two figures were seated, a man and a woman. The man, broad-shouldered and heavily bearded, stretched his listless powerful length beyond a broken bamboo chair, with his eyes fixed on the fire. The woman crouched cross-legged upon the broad earthen hearth, with her eyes blinkingly fixed on her companion. They were small, black, round, berry-like eyes, and as the firelight shone upon her smoky face, with its one striped cheek of gorgeous brilliancy, it was plainly the Princess Bob and no other.

Not a word was spoken. They had been sitting thus for more than an hour, and there was about their attitude a suggestion that silence was habitual. Once or twice the man rose and walked up and down the narrow room, or gazed absently from the windows of the pilot-house, but never by look or sign betrayed the slightest consciousness of his companion. At such times the Princess from her nest by the fire followed him with eyes of canine expectancy and wistfulness. But he would as inevitably return to his contemplation of the fire, and the Princess to her blinking watchfulness of his face.

They had sat there silent and undisturbed for many an evening in fair weather and foul. They had spent many a day in sunshine and storm, gathering the unclaimed spoil of sea and shore. They had kept these mute relations, varied only by the incidents of the hunt or meagre household duties, for three years, ever since the man, wandering moodily over the lonely sands, had fallen upon the half-starved woman lying in the little hollow where

she had crawled to die. It had seemed as if they would never be disturbed, until now, when the Princess started, and, with the instinct of her race, bent her ear to the ground.

The wind had risen and was rattling the tarred canvas. But in another moment there plainly came from without the hut the sound of voices. Then followed a rap at the door; then another rap; and then, before they could rise to their feet, the door was flung briskly open.

"I beg your pardon," said a pleasant but somewhat decided contralto voice, "but I don't think you heard me knock. Ah, I see you did not. May I come in?"

There was no reply. Had the battered figurehead of the Goddess of Liberty, which lay deeply embedded in the sand on the beach, suddenly appeared at the door demanding admittance, the occupants of the cabin could not have been more speechlessly and hopelessly astonished than at the form which stood in the open doorway.

It was that of a slim, shapely, elegently dressed young woman. A scarlet-lined silken hood was half thrown back from the shining mass of the black hair that covered her small head; from her pretty shoulders dropped a fur cloak, only restrained by a cord and tassel in her small gloved hand. Around her full throat was a double necklace of large white beads, that by some cunning feminine trick relieved with its infantile suggestion the strong decision of her lower face.

"Did you say yes? Ah, thank you. We may come in, Barker." (Here a shadow in a blue army overcoat followed her into the cabin, touched its cap respectfully, and then stood silent and erect against the wall.) "Don't disturb yourself in the least, I beg. What a distressingly unpleasant night! Is this your usual climate?"

Half graciously, half absently overlooking the still embarrassed silence of the group, she went on: "We started from the fort over three hours ago,—three hours ago, wasn't it, Barker?" (the erect Barker touched his cap,)—"to go to Captain Emmons's quarters on Indian Island,—I think you call it Indian Island, don't you?" (she was appealing to the awe-stricken Princess,)—"and we got into the fog and lost our way; that is, Barker lost his way," (Barker touched his cap deprecatingly,) "and goodness knows where we didn't wander to until we mistook your light for the lighthouse and pulled up here. No, no, pray keep your seat, do! Really I must insist."

Nothing could exceed the languid grace of the latter part of this speech,—nothing except the easy unconsciousness with which she glided by the offered chair of her stammering, embarrassed host and stood beside the open hearth.

"Barker will tell you," she continued, warming her feet by the fire, "that I am Miss Portfire, daughter of Major Portfire, commanding the post. Ah, excuse me, child!" (She had accidentally trodden upon the bare yellow toes of the Princess.) "Really, I did not know you were there. I am very near-sighted." (In confirmation of her statement, she put to her eyes a dainty double eyeglass that dangled from her neck.) "It's a shocking thing to be near-sighted, isn't it?"

If the shamefaced uneasy man to

whom this remark was addressed could have found words to utter the thought that even in his confusion struggled uppermost in his mind, he would, looking at the bold, dark eyes that questioned him, have denied the fact. But he only stammered, "Yes." The next moment, however, Miss Portfire had apparently forgotten him and was examining the Princess through her glass.

"And what is your name, child?"

The Princess, beatified by the eyes and eyeglass, showed all her white teeth at once, and softly scratched her leg.

"Bob."

"Bob? What a singular name!"

Miss Portfire's host here hastened to explain the origin of the Princess's title.

"Then *you* are Bob." (Eye-glass.)

"No, my name is Grey,—John Grey." And he actually achieved a bow where awkwardness was rather the air of imperfectly recalling a forgotten habit.

"Grey?—ah, let me see. Yes, certainly. You are Mr. Grey the recluse, the hermit, the philosopher, and all that sort of thing. Why, certainly; Dr. Jones, our surgeon, has told me all about you. Dear me, how interesting a rencontre! Lived all alone here for seven—was it seven years?—yes, I remember now. Existed quite *au naturel*, one might say. How odd! Not that I know anything about that sore of thing, you know. I've lived always among people, and am really quite a stranger, I assure you. But honestly, Mr.—I beg your pardon—Mr. Grey, how do you like it?"

She had quietly taken his chair and thrown her cloak and hood over its back, and was now thoughtfully removing her gloves. Whatever were the arguments,—and they were doubtless many and profound,—whatever the experience,—and it was doubtless hard and satisfying enough,—by which this unfortunate man had justified his life for the last seven years, somehow they suddenly became trivial and terribly ridiculous before this simple but practical question.

"Well, you shall tell me all about it after you have given me something to eat. We will have time enough; Barker cannot find his way back in this fog to-night. Now don't put yourselves to any trouble on my account. Barker will assist."

Barker came forward. Glad to escape the scrutiny of his guest, the hermit gave a few rapid directions to the Princess in her native tongue, and disappeared in the shed. Left a moment alone, Miss Portfire took a quick, half-audible, feminine inventory of the cabin. "Books, guns, skins, *one* chair, *one bed,* no pictures, and no looking-glass!" She took a book from the swinging shelf and resumed her seat by the fire as the Princess re-entered with fresh fuel. But while kneeling on the hearth the Princess chanced to look up and met Miss Portfire's dark eyes over the edge of her book.

"Bob!"

The Princess showed her teeth.

"Listen. Would you like to have fine clothes, rings, and beads like these, to have your hair nicely combed and put up so? Would you?"

The Princess nodded violently.

"Would you like to live with me and have them? Answer quickly. Don't look round for *him*. Speak for your-

self. Would you? Hush; never mind now."

The hermit re-entered, and the Princess, blinking, retreated into the shadow of the whale-boat shed, from which she did not emerge even when the homely repast of cold venison, ship biscuit, and tea was served. Miss Portfire noticed her absence: "You really must not let me interfere with your usual simple ways. Do you know this is exceedingly interesting to me, so pastoral and patriarchal and all that sort of thing. I must insist upon the Princess coming back; really, I must."

But the Princess was not to be found in the shed, and Miss Portfire, who the next minute seemed to have forgotten all about her, took her place in the single chair before an extemporized table. Barker stood behind her, and the hermit leaned against the fireplace. Miss Portfire's appetite did not come up to her protestations. For the first time in seven years it occurred to the hermit that his ordinary victual might be improved. He stammered out something to that effect.

"I have eaten better, and worse," said Miss Portfire, quietly.

"But I thought you—that is, you said——"

"I spent a year in the hospitals, when father was on the Potomac," returned Miss Portfire, composedly. After a pause she continued: "You remember after the second Bull Run— But, dear me! I beg your pardon; of course, you know nothing about the war and all that sort of thing, and don't care." (She put up her eye-glass and quietly surveyed his broad muscular figure against the chimney.) "Or, perhaps, your prejudices— But then, as a hermit you know you have no politics, of course. Please don't let me bore you."

To have been strictly consistent, the hermit should have exhibited no interest in this topic. Perhaps it was owing to some quality in the narrator, but he was constrained to beg her to continue in such phrases as his unfamiliar lips could command. So that, little by little, Miss Portfire yielded up incident and personal observation of the contest then raging; with the same half-abstracted, half-unconcerned air that seemed habitual to her, she told the stories of privation, of suffering, of endurance, and of sacrifice. With the same assumption of timid deference that concealed her great self-control, she talked of principles and rights. Apparently without enthusiasm and without effort, of which his morbid nature would have been suspicious, she sang the great American Iliad in a way that stirred the depths of her solitary auditor to its massive foundations. Then she stopped and asked quietly, "Where is Bob?"

The hermit started. He would look for her. But Bob, for some reason was not forthcoming. Search was made within and without the hut, but in vain. For the first time that evening Miss Portfire showed some anxiety. "Go," she said to Barker, "and find her. She *must* be found; stay, give me your overcoat, I'll go myself." She threw the overcoat over her shoulders and stepped out into the night. In the thick veil of fog that seemed suddenly to inwrap her, she stood for a moment irresolute, and then walked toward the beach, guided by the low wash of waters on the sand. She ha

not taken many steps before she stumbled over some dark crouching object. Reaching down her hand she felt the coarse wiry mane of the Princess.

"Bob!"

There was no reply.

"Bob. I've been looking for you, come."

"Go 'way."

"Nonsense, Bob. I want you to stay with me to-night, come."

"Injin squaw no good for waugee woman. Go 'way."

"Listen, Bob. You are daughter of a chief: so am I. Your father had many warriors: so has mine. It is good that you stay with me. Come."

The Princess chuckled and suffered herself to be lifted up. A few moments later and they re-entered the hut, hand in hand.

With the first red streaks of dawn the next day the erect Barker touched his cap at the door of the hut. Beside him stood the hermit, also just risen from his blanketed nest in the sand. Forth from the hut, fresh as the morning air, stepped Miss Portfire, leading the Princess by the hand. Hand in hand also they walked to the shore, and when the Princess had been safely bestowed in the stern sheets, Miss Portfire turned and held out her own to her late host.

"I shall take the best of care of her, of course. You will come and see her often. I should ask you to come and see me, but you are a hermit, you know, and all that sort of thing. But if it's the correct anchorite thing, and can be done, my father will be glad to requite you for this night's hospitality. But don't do anything on my account that interferes with your simple habits. Good by."

She handed him a card, which he took mechanically.

"Good by."

The sail was hoisted, and the boat shoved off. As the fresh morning breeze caught the white canvas it seemed to bow a parting salutation There was a rosy flush of promise on the water, and as the light craft darted forward toward the ascending sun, it seemed for a moment uplifted in its glory.

Miss Portfire kept her word. If thoughtful care and intelligent kindness could regenerate the Princess, her future was secure. And it really seemed as if she were for the first time inclined to heed the lessons of civilization and profit by her new condition. An agreeable change was first noticed in her appearance. Her lawless hair was caught in a net, and no longer strayed over her low forehead. Her unstable bust was stayed and upheld by French corsets; her plantigrade shuffle was limited by heeled boots. Her dresses were neat and clean, and she wore a double necklace of glass beads. With this physical improvement there also seemed some moral awakening. She no longer stole nor lied. With the possession of personal property came a respect for that of others. With increased dependence on the word of those about her came a thoughtful consideration of her own. Intellectually she was still feeble, although she grappled sturdily with the simple lessons which Miss Portfire set before her. But her zeal and simple vanity outran her discretion, and she

would often sit for hours with an open book before her, which she could not read. She was a favorite with the officers at the fort, from the Major, who shared his daughter's prejudices and often yielded to her powerful self-will, to the subalterns, who liked her none the less that their natural enemies, the frontier volunteers, had declared war against her helpless sisterhood. The only restraint put upon her was the limitation of her liberty to the enclosure of the fort and parade; and only once did she break this parole, and was stopped by the sentry as she stepped into a boat at the landing.

The recluse did not avail himself of Miss Portfire's invitation. But after the departure of the Princess he spent less of his time in the hut, and was more frequently seen in the distant marshes of Eel River and on the upland hills. A feverish restlessness, quite opposed to his usual phlegm, led him into singular freaks strangely inconsistent with his usual habits and reputation. The purser of the occasional steamer which stopped at Logport with the mails reported to have been boarded, just inside the bar, by a strange bearded man, who asked for a newspaper containing the last war telegrams. He tore his red shirt into narrow strips, and spent two days with his needle over the pieces and the tattered remnant of his only white garment; and a few days afterward the fishermen on the bay were surprised to see what, on nearer approach, proved to be a rude imitation of the national flag floating from a spar above the hut.

One evening, as the fog began to drift over the sand-hills, the recluse sat alone in his hut. The fire was dying unheeded on the hearth, for he had been sitting there for a long time, completely absorbed in the blurred pages of an old newspaper. Presently he arose, and, refolding it,—an operation of great care and delicacy in its tattered condition,—placed it under the blankets of his bed. He resumed his seat by the fire, but soon began drumming with his fingers on the arm of his chair. Eventually this assumed the time and accent of some air. Then he began to whistle softly and hesitatingly, as if trying to recall a forgotten tune. Finally this took shape in a rude resemblance, not unlike that which his flag bore to the national standard, to Yankee Doodle. Suddenly he stopped.

There was an unmistakable rapping at the door. The blood which had at first rushed to his face now forsook it and settled slowly around his heart. He tried to rise, but could not. Then the door was flung open, and a figure with a scarlet-lined hood and fur mantle stood on the threshold. With a mighty effort he took one stride to the door. The next moment he saw the wide mouth and white teeth of the Princess, and was greeted by a kiss that felt like a baptism.

To tear the hood and mantle from her figure in the sudden fury that seized him, and to fiercely demand the reason of this masquerade, was his only return to her greeting. "Why are you here? did you steal these garments?" he again demanded in her guttural language, as he shook her roughly by the arm. The Princess hung her head. "Did you?" he screamed as he reached wildly for his rifle.

"I did."

His hold relaxed, and he staggered back against the wall. The Princess began to whimper. Between her sobs, she was trying to explain that the Major and his daughter were going away, and that they wanted to send her to the Reservation; but he cut her short. "Take off those things!" The Princess tremblingly obeyed. He rolled them up, placed them in the canoe she had just left, and then leaped into the frail craft. She would have followed, but with a great oath he threw her from him, and with one stroke of his paddle swept out into the fog, and was gone.

"Jessamy," said the Major, a few days after, as he sat at dinner with his daughter, "I think I can tell you something to match the mysterious disappearance and return of your wardrobe. Your crazy friend, the recluse, has enlisted this morning in the Fourth Artillery. He's a splendid-looking animal, and there's the right stuff for a soldier in him, if I'm not mistaken. He's in earnest too, for he enlists in the regiment ordered back to Washington. Bless me, child, another goblet broken; you'll ruin the mess in glassware, at this rate!"

"Have you heard anything more of the Princess, papa?"

"Nothing, but perhaps it's as well that she has gone. These cursed settlers are at their old complaints again about what they call 'Indian depredations,' and I have just received orders from headquarters to keep the settlement clear of all vagabond aborigines. I am afraid, my dear, that a strict construction of the term would include your *protégée*."

The time for the departure of the Fourth Artillery had come. The night before was thick and foggy. At one o'clock, a shot on the ramparts called out the guard and roused the sleeping garrison. The new sentry, Private Grey, had challenged a dusky figure creeping on the glacis, and, receiving no answer, had fired. The guard sent out presently returned, bearing a lifeless figure in their arms. The new sentry's zeal, joined with an ex-frontiersman's aim, was fatal.

They laid the helpless, ragged form before the guard-house door, and then saw for the first time that it was the Princess. Presently she opened her eyes. They fell upon the agonized face of her innocent slayer, but haply without intelligence or reproach.

"Georgy!" she whispered.

"Bob!"

"All's same now. Me get plenty well soon. Me make no more fuss. Me go to Reservation."

Then she stopped, a tremor ran through her limbs, and she lay still. She had gone to the Reservation. Not that devised by the wisdom of man, but that one set apart from the foundation of the world for the wisest as well as the meanest of His creatures.

Abbé Dumont's Mystery

When sleep would exert its influence over us and begin to clog the words upon our lips, I would take up my gun, call my dog, and the Abbé Dumont would walk with me as far as the extremity of the meadow which terminated the valley of Bussières; here we would shake hands. I would silently climb the stony hill, at one time in the light of soft summer nights; at another, through the humid shadows which were made still heavier by the thick mists of the beginning of autumn.

I would find the aged servant waiting for me, and twirling her distaff the while by the light of the brazen lamp which hung in the kitchen. I would retire to rest and awake on the morrow, to begin another day similar to the one that had passed.

That which increased my attachment to the poor curate of Bussières, was the cloud of melancholy which saddened his countenance. That shadow extinguished the last fires of youth in his glance, and lent a certain faint-hearted languor to his words and his voice, which was in harmony with my own languidness of mind. You could feel that there was a painful and smothered mystery hid beneath his disclosures. You could see that he never told you all that he had to say, and that a last secret always hovered round his lips, but never escaped from them.

I never attempted to wrest that mystery from him; he would not have intrusted it to me. Between a confession of that nature and the most friendly intimacy with a young man of my age, arose the barrier of the sacred proprieties of his holy office. But the whisperings of the gossips of the village began to reveal to me some confused rumors; and, at a later day, I was made acquainted with that sorrowful mystery in all its details. Here it is:—

At the time when persecution drove the bishop of Macon from his palace and confined him in a dungeon, the Abbé Dumont was nothing more than a young and handsome secretary; he returned to the dwelling of the aged curate of Bussières, who had taken his oath of adherence to the constitution. He mingled with the world, and, with the ascendency which his face, his courage, and his mind gave him, participated in the various movements of opinion which agitated the youth of Macon and Lyons at the downfall of monarchy. In the beginning of the Republic he made himself particularly notorious by his antipathy to the Jacobins and his boldness in opposing them. During the Reign of Terror he was tracked as a royalist, and he finally enrolled himself in those secret bands of young royalists which were spreading in every direction, and which formed a chain from the Sevennes mountains to the environs of Lyons.

He was daring and venturesome; and conformity of opinion, as well as the chances of association and the dangers of civil war, made him form an intimacy with the son of an aged noble of the Forez. The chateau of that family was situated in a wild valley, on a steep hillock. It was a hotbed of conspiracy, and the headquarters of the royalist youth of the neighborhood. The old

lord had lost his wife at the commencement of the Revolution. At her death, she had left him four daughters, who had hardly passed through the age of adolescence. These young girls—reared without a mother, without a governess, in the chateau of an old man, who was a hunter and a soldier, and whose character was singular and eccentric, while his mind was illiterate and uncultivated—had none of the attributes of their sex but extreme beauty, simplicity, and grace, united to all the vividness of feeling and all the imprudence of their age.

Their father had accustomed them, from their earliest childhood, to be his companions at table, in the midst of his guests of every description, and to ride horses, handle guns, and follow him to the chase, which was the principal occupation of his life. It is easy to credit that such a charming court always assembled around such an old man, in peace or war, at the feast or in the chase, naturally attracted youth, courage, and love to the chateau of———.

The Abbé Dumont, in the garb of a warrior and hunter, young, handsome, agile, dexterous, eloquent, hailed by the father, welcomed by his friend the son, agreeable to the young girls by the elegance of his manners and the superiority of his mind, became the most assiduous skainsmate at the chateau. It may be said that he was a member of the family and an additional brother to the young girls. In one of the high turrets of the donjon, he occupied a chamber which overlooked the whole country, and from which could be seen a great extent of the only road which led to the castle. As he was appointed to give notice of the approach of the gendarmes or patrols of the National Guard, he watched over the security of the doors and kept in order the arsenal, which was always well stocked with loaded guns and pistols, and which even contained two mounted culverins, with which the Count de ——— was determined to do execution upon the republicans, should they risk themselves in those gorges.

At the chateau, their time was occupied in receiving and despatching disguised messengers who linked the superstitious and counter-revolutionary spirit of those mountains with the emigrants in Savoy and the conspirators in Lyons; in scouring the woods on foot and on horseback for game; in practising the use of arms; in defying the Jacobins of the neighboring towns, who were constantly denouncing that *den* of aristocrats, but who did not dare to disperse it; in playing and dancing with the youth of the chateaux in the neighborhood, who were attracted thither by the united charms of opinion, adventure, and pleasure.

Although the young ladies mingled in all this commotion, and although they were left entirely to the exercise of their own prudence, there was nothing like impropriety or licentiousness in their intercourse with their guests, between whom and themselves, however, there existed mutual preferences, tastes, and attractions. The memory of their mother and the knowledge of their own peril, seemed to protect them better than the most rigid vigilance could have done. They were simple, but innocent; like the daughters of the peasants who were their vassals, they were free from suspicion and prudery, but not devoid of watchfulness over themselves and of the dignity of their sex and their instincts.

The two oldest had become attached, and were betrothed to two young noblemen of the South; the third was impatiently awaiting the time when the convents should be reopened in order to devote herself to God, her only thought. Tranquil in the midst of all that agitation, cold in that hotbed of love and enthusiasm, she managed her father's household affairs like a matron of twenty. The fourth had hardly reached her sixteenth year. She was the favorite of her father and sisters.

The admiration which was felt for her as a young girl was mingled with that cheerful complacency with which children are always treated. Her beauty, which was more attractive than dazzling, was the blooming of a loving soul which allows itself to be gazed upon and inhaled through the features, the eyes, and the smile. The further you plunged into it, the more of tenderness, innocence, and goodness you discovered in it. From the impression which she made on me,—as I saw her a great many years afterwards, when the dust of life and her tears had doubtless robbed that face of the freshness and the down of adolescence,—it was easy to recall that ravishing reminiscence of sixteen.

She neither had the languidness of the pale daughters of the North, nor the burning glow of a child of the South, nor the melancholy of an English woman, nor the majesty of an Italian woman; her features, in which grace of expression predominated over purity of form,—her pleasing mouth, her small nose, her chestnut hair and eyes,—rather reminded you of a village bride—somewhat scorched by the rays of the sun and the glances of the young men—when she has clothed herself in her wedding garments and sheds around her, as she enters church, a shudder which delights but which does not intimidate.

She unconsciously became attached to that young adventurer, her brother's friend, who was nearer her own age than any of the other strangers who frequented the chateau. In those days, the mere quality of royalist gave those who fought and suffered for the same opinions a certain familiarity in the houses of the nobility where they were received as companions in arms.

The young man was well read. In consequence of this he was chosen by the father to give lessons in reading, writing, and religion, to the young girl. She looked upon him as a brother who was somewhat more advanced in life than herself. He was answerable for her during the perilous excursions which she made with her father and sisters to hunt the wild boar in the mountains; he was the one who adjusted the bridle and fastened the girth of her horse, who loaded her gun, who carried that gun slung across his shoulders, who aided her to overleap the ravines and torrents, who plunged into the thickets and brought her the game which she had shot, who wrapped her in his cloak to protect her from the rain or snow. Such frequent and complete intimacy between a sensitive and ardent young man, and a young girl whose childhood each day was imperceptibly changing into adolescence and charms, could hardly fail of awakening in their bosoms, almost without their knowledge, a first and involuntary attachment. There is no snare more dangerous for two pure hearts than that which is prepared by habit and veiled by innocence. They had both fallen into it ere either of them had sus-

pected it. Time and circumstances were soon to make them aware of this.

The Revolutionary Committee of the town of ——— was aware of the plots which were brewing with impunity at the chateau of ———. The indignation of the Committee was aroused against the neighboring municipalities, which were either unable or afraid to disperse that nest of conspirators. It resolved to extinguish that counter-revolutionary brand, which threatened to inflame the whole country. It secretly formed a column of gendarmes, light artillery, and national guards. These troops marched all night, in order to arrive beneath the walls of the castle before daybreak, and take the inhabitants by surprise.

There was no means of escape from the chateau, which had been completely surrounded during the slumbers of its inmates. The commander of the republican forces summoned the Count de ——— to open the gates. He was constrained to obey. Orders of arrest had been drawn up in advance against the Count and all the principal members of the family,—even the women. They had to surrender themselves as prisoners. The old lord, his brother, son, guests, domestics, and three eldest daughters, were thrown into carts to be taken to the prisons of Lyons. The escutcheons and arms of the castle, including the two culverins, bound round with branches of oak, were dragged as trophies behind the carts into which the prisoners had been thrust. Of all this household, free and peaceful on the eve, the only ones who were not led into captivity, were their constant guest and the Count's youngest daughter.

The young man, who had been awakened in his turret-chamber by the clash of arms and the tramp of horses in the outer court, had hastily dressed and armed himself, and descended to the armory to sell his life as dearly as possible, in the defence of his hosts and friends. It was too late. All the doors of the castle were in the hands of the National Guards. The commander of the column had already entered the Count's room with the gendarmes, where he was busily engaged placing the public seal on the aged nobleman's papers. On the stairs, the young man met the Count's daughters, who were descending to their father's chamber to be by his side and share his fate.

"Save our sister," hurriedly said the three eldest to him; "we are resolved to follow our father everywhere—to the dungeon, or even to the scaffold; but she, she is a mere child, she has not the right to dispose of her life; hide her from the wretches who guard the doors. —Here is gold!—You will find her in our room, where we have dressed her in male attire. You know the secret passages. God will watch over you. Take her into the Sevennes, to the house of our aged aunt, who is the only relative we have in the wide world; she will receive her, and be a second mother to her. Farewell!"

The stranger followed these instructions to the letter, happy to be the guardian of such a trust and to follow commands which were in such strict conformity with his own inclinations.

In the castle of ——— there was a subterranean passage,—similar to those which were to be found in all the fortified dwellings of the middle ages,—which began in the vaults beneath the principal tower, passed under the ter-

race, and, terminating at a postern, descended by a flight of three or four hundred steps to the foot of the steep hillock on which the chateau was built. There, an iron gate, similar to the wicket of a dungeon, practised in a fissure in the rock, opened upon the vast meadows surrounded by woods which formed the bed of the river and the valley.

The existence of this gate, which was never used, was not known to the republicans. The inhabitants of the castle were the only ones who knew where its key was kept, to be used only in extreme emergencies. The young man possessed himself of the key, returned to the chamber of the weeping maiden, conducted her through the gloomy passage, opened the wicket, and, gliding from willow to willow along the bed of the torrent, succeeded in reaching the woods with his sacred charge.

The moment that he found himself in the well-known paths of these forests, armed with two guns, his own and that of his companion, and furnished with gold and ammunition, he bade defiance to all mankind. With the devotedness of a slave and the tender care of a father, he led the maiden,—who looked like his younger brother,—across fields, from thicket to thicket, and from road to road, to the outskirts of the little town in which lived the aunt of Mademoiselle de ———.

Their hunter's attire precluded the necessity of assigning any reason for the care with which they avoided the highroads and the villages on their route. On the other hand, the connivance of the royalist and religious peasants of those mountains had accustomed them to respect the secret of those flights and disguises which were so frequent in that section of the country.

Nevertheless, before entering the little town of ———, where greater vigilance was doubtless exercised, the young man thought it best to warn the aunt of Mademoiselle de ——— of the approach of her young niece, and to ask her under what name and disguise and at what hour he should conduct the maiden to her house.

He despatched a lad to the town with a note for that lady. After the lapse of a few hours, during which the thought of their approaching separation had caused the tears of his companion to flow incessantly, he saw the boy return with the very note which he had written. The aunt herself had been arrested and conveyed by gendarmes to Nismes. The house was closed: the poor child was thus shut out of the only asylum which could have sheltered her at her journey's end. At the bottom of their souls, the two fugitives were more astonished than afflicted by this unexpected blow. The thought of an early and eternal separation appalled them more than they dared to acknowledge even to their own hearts. Fate united them. Even while they reproached it, they adored it.

They deliberated a moment on the course that they should adopt. They naturally, and without any previous understanding, settled upon the course that should separate them at the latest day possible. The young outlaw could not return to the house of the curate of Bussières, without exposing himself to instant arrest and his benefactor to certain ruin; there was not a single house in the Forez in which the young girl might have found an asylum, which had

not been closed by the Reign of Terror, and whose owners themselves had not been proscribed. They resolved to turn back in the direction of the castle of ———, and ask for shelter in the cottages of some of the hospitable peasants who were yet attached to their old lord, and who inhabited the neighboring mountains.

They returned by short marches. They knocked one night at the door of a poor woman,—the widow of a maker of wooden shoes,—who had been the young girl's nurse, and whose tenderness, gratitude, and devotedness were surety for her fidelity. The lonely hut, situated on the plateau of one of the highest mountains, in a gloomy glade surrounded by beech woods, was inaccessible to any one save the wood-cutters and huntsmen of the neighboring hamlets. Small, low, sunk in the hollow of a ravine; covered with moss-grown thatch, which almost touched the earth and whose color was hardly distinguishable from that of the *steppes* themselves, it looked from below like a part of the gray rocks against which the poor shoemaker had built it. A little column of bluish smoke which shot up, each morning and evening, in the midst of the white trunks of the beech-trees, was the only sign that indicated that there was a human habitation there, or that some charcoal-burner had lighted his fire of green wood beneath his nomade hut.

Within these walls, built of angular blocks of dark granite and black slate, and spotted by the rain, there was only one small room, in which the poor woman and her children slept. The hearth was formed by a large unhewn stone on which smoked a fire of broom. Alongside of the hut stood a stable which was somewhat larger than the room, and beneath whose roof was a sort of loft, made of interwoven branches, in which hay and straw were stowed for winter use. A she-ass, two goats, and a few sheep entered here in the evening, driven by little children, under whose care they were sent to pasture.

The nurse, who had long since been informed of the catastrophe at the castle,—the imprisonment of the Count, and the disappearance of the young girl that she had so dearly loved,—burst into tears when she recognised her foster-child beneath her male attire. She gave her mistress her own bed, at the foot of which she spread a couch of broom for herself; she carried the beds of the little children into the stable which was warmed by the breath of the flock, and gave the stranger a few thick fleeces with which to protect himself from the cold in the hayloft.

After settling matters in this way, she set out before the break of day and trudged to the most distant borough in the mountains, to purchase some white bread, wine, cheese, and a few chickens for the nurture of her guests. She took the precaution to buy these things in different villages, through fear of arousing suspicion by an outlay which was disproportionate to her means and her habits. Before mid-day, she had again climbed the mountain, emptied her wallets upon the floor, and spread the cloth for the repast of the strangers.

The nurse had given orders to her children not to go further than a certain distance from the hut, and not to talk

with the mountain shepherds about the two hunters who had brought plenty, joy, and the blessing of God into their dwelling. The children, proud to be the repositories and the guardians of a mystery, obeyed their mother faithfully. No one in the whole country suspected that the shoemaker's humble hut,—which was buried in leaves in summer, and in fog and snow in winter,—contained within its walls a whole world of happiness, love, and faithfulness. If I thus describe this hut, it is because I visited it, at another period of my life, during a journey which I took to the South.

No one can either know, invent, or describe all the feelings that agitated the hearts of that youthful couple,—who were thus brought together by solitude, necessity, and mutual attraction,—during the year which was made too long by the terror which reigned without, but which was too short, perhaps, for the words of love and trust which were uttered within. Not a syllable of these conversations and confessions ever went further than the walls of the hut, the lilacs in the garden, the bed of the torrent, or the beech-trees in the forest. The life of those two young hermits never escaped beyond those precincts. They only sallied forth at night, with their loaded guns on their arms, to stretch their limbs which were fatigued by repose; to take long nocturnal rambles through unfrequented paths; to breathe the perfume of the sweet-scented broom; to cull the Alpine flowers by the light of the summer moon; or to seat themselves side by side on the moss-grown slope of a concave rock, whence their eyes plunged into the valley of ———, and rested upon the deserted castle, or wandered as far as the vast horizon of blue which, like a deep sea, stretched above the Rhine and extended as far as the snows of the Italian Alps.

Who can accuse them without first accusing their destiny? In that forced association, who can say what undefined limit between respect and adoration, or between virtue and love, bounded the feeling which those two children nourished towards one another? God's eye alone could have seen it. The eye of man is dimmed and dazzled and moistened when it rests on the mystery of such a situation! If fault there was, man can only see it through the tears, which, as he condemns, wash out the fault and absolve the faulty.—The doors of the world closed upon them, those of heaven opened to them; the pressure of proscription weighing upon their hearts and driving them, despite themselves, into each other's arms; the similarity of age, costume, and feeling; the equal innocence or ignorance of danger; the difference of station forgotten or obliterated in that complete estrangement from the world; the uncertainty whether society, with its prejudices and distinctions, would ever be open to them again; the haste to take advantage of the freedom which they were in momentary danger of losing, and which they enjoyed as a stolen pleasure; the shortness of life at a time when no one knew whether a morrow would ever dawn; that darkness of the night which breeds intimacy; that light of the moon which inebriates the eye and bewilders the heart; their double captivity in the nurse's dwelling—a captivity which left their thoughts no possible diversion

which offered no interruption to their intercourse; finally, that elevated, narrow, and almost inaccessible part of space which appeared to them as an aërial isle suspended between the earth, which they could see at a distance beneath their feet, and the sky, which they beheld so near above their heads, —every thing concurred to drive them into each other's arms, and bind them by all the ties of their souls in a moral union; to force them to search each other's heart for that life which had shrunk from around them, and, as it were, faded from their sight:—a life that thus became double at the very moment when they were threatened with its loss, and which only had solitude for its scene of action and contemplation for its food.

Were they sufficiently prudent, young as they were, to foresee the eternal temptations of their solitude? Were they sufficiently strong to resist them when they experienced them? Did they love one another as brother and sister? Did they promise one another more tender names?—Who can answer? I have been intimately acquainted with both of them. Neither the one nor the other ever confessed any thing with regard to that year of adventure. Whenever they met, however, many years afterwards, they never looked at one another in the present of strangers. A sudden cloud of mingled red and white would spread itself over their countenances, as if some phantom of past days, which we could not see, had passed before their eyes and cast its magical reflection upon their features. Was it affection badly smothered?—passion kindled again beneath the ashes by a breath?—indifference agitated by remembrance?—regret?—or remorse? —Who can peer into two sealed hearts and read characters which have been obliterated by torrents of tears, and which are only visible to the eye of God?

More than one year passed thus. Then the Reign of Terror became less severe in that section of the country. The prisons were thrown open. The old Count and his three daughters re-entered their ruined castle. The nurse led the youngest daughter back to her father's arms. The stranger was the last to leave those mountains.

He returned to the vicarage of Bussières, sad, and apparently twenty years older. His character had attained the maturity of ten additional years in a few short months. He followed the chase with greater assiduity than before, in the company of my father and the noblemen of the country. He would sometimes absent himself, however, for several days, and go on distant journeys whose object was unknown to every one. On his return, he would say that his dogs had put him upon the track of some roebucks, and that in order not to lose them he had been obliged to follow. And rumor said that no change had taken place at the chateau of ———, in the other county, unless it was that the guest who had disappeared no longer visited its owners as of yore. The latter continued to lead the life of hunting, feasting, and seigneurial hospitality, which they had led during the Revolution.

As to the poor nurse, she still dwelt in the lonely hut upon the mountain.

She had an orphan to rear along with her own children. This child wore linen that was finer than that which was made in the mountains. In his hands he often had toys which looked as though they had been purchased in the town. Whenever the poor woman was asked why this distinction was made, and who was the owner of that orphan, she always answered that she had found him beneath a beech-tree, near the spring, as she was going to fetch water one morning, and that a pedler who trafficked on those mountains sometimes brought him white linen and toys of ivory and coral. That charity had made her rich. I have known this orphan. He was the child of proscription, and he had its sadness in his soul and upon his features.

Five or six years afterwards, the Count's youngest daughter was married to an old man, who was the most gentle and the most indulgent of fathers to her. She devoted herself to the care of his declining years. He took her with him to a little town in the South, in which he lived. The young companion of her exile, who, until then, had been wavering between the world and the church, suddenly put an end to his irresolution when he heard of the young girl's marriage. He saw nothing more in life that was worthy of a regret. He gave it up without any effort. He entered a seminary without casting a look behind him. Then he went and shut himself up for a few weeks with his former patron, the bishop of Macon, who had at last been liberated and who was ending his days, in the midst of poverty and infirmities, in the house of one of his faithful servants, within a few feet of what had formerly been his episcopal palace. The bishop invested him with holy orders. He returned to discharge the humble duties of the vicarage of Bussières. He continued them, as I have said, until the death of the old curate, to whom he succeeded.

Such was the hidden part of that man's life, a life which chance seemed to have placed alongside of my own life as a mournful and tender consonance with the precocious disenchantment of my youth,—a bitter smile of resignation above an abyss of painful sensibility, burning recollections, smouldering love and restrained tears. It was the transparency of all these things in his demeanor, in his physiognomy, in his silence, and in his accent, no doubt, which attached me to him. Had he been happy and faultless, I would not have loved him as I did. There is a degree of pity in all our friendships. Misfortune has an attraction for certain souls. The cement of our heart is mixed with tears, and nearly all our deep affections have their beginning in some sorrowful emotion!

Lady Champer's Prince

"It's astonishing what you take for granted!" Lady Champer had exclaimed to her young friend at an early stage; and this might have served as a sign that even then the little plot had begun to thicken. The reflection was uttered at the time the outlook of the charming American girl in whom she found her-

self so interested was still much in the rough. They had often met, with pleasure to each, during a winter spent in Rome; and Lily had come to her in London towards the end of May with further news of a situation the dawn of which, in March and April, by the Tiber, the Arno, and the Seine, had considerably engaged her attention. The Prince had followed Miss Gunton to Florence and then with almost equal promptitude to Paris, where it was both clear and comical for Lady Champer that the rigour of his uncertainty as to parental commands and remittances now detained him. This shrewd woman promised herself not a little amusement from her view of the possibilities of the case. Lily was on the whole showing a wonder; therefore the drama would lose nothing from her character, her temper, her tone. She was waiting—this was the truth she had imparted to her clever protectress—to see if her Roman captive would find himself drawn to London. Should he really turn up there she would the next thing start for America, putting him to the test of that wider range and declining to place her confidence till he should have arrived in New York at her heels. If he remained in Paris or returned to Rome she would stay in London and, as she phrased it, have a good time by herself. Did he expect her to go back to Paris for him? Why not in that case just as well go back to Rome at once? The first thing for her, Lily intimated to her London adviser, was to show what, in her position, *she* expected.

Her position meanwhile was one that Lady Champer, try as she would, had as yet succeeded neither in understanding nor in resigning herself not to understand. It was that of being extraordinarily pretty, amazingly free, and perplexingly good, and of presenting these advantages in a positively golden light. How was one to estimate a girl whose nearest approach to a drawback—that is, to an encumbrance—appeared to be a grandfather carrying on a business in an American city, her ladyship had never otherwise heard of, with whom communication was all by cable and on the subject of "drawing"? Expression was on the old man's part moreover as concise as it was expensive, consisting as it inveterately did of but the single word "Draw." Lily drew, on every occasion in life, and it at least could not be said of the pair—when the "family idea," as embodied in America, was exposed to criticism—that they were not in touch. Mr. Gunton had given her further Mrs. Brine, to come out with her, and with this provision and the perpetual pecuniary he plainly figured—to Lily's own mind—as solicitous to the point of anxiety. Mrs. Brine's scheme of relations seemed in truth to be simpler still. There was a transatlantic "Mr. Brine," of whom she often spoke—and never in any other way; but she wrote for newspapers; she prowled in catacombs, visiting more than once even those of Paris; she haunted hotels; she picked up compatriots; she spoke above all a language that often baffled comprehension. She mattered, however, but little; she was mainly so occupied in having what Lily had likewise independently glanced at—a good time by herself. It was difficult enough indeed to Lady Champer to see the wonderful girl reduced to that, yet she was a little person who kept one somehow in presence of the incalculable. Old measures and

familiar rules were of no use at all with her—she had so broken the moulds and so mixed the marks. What was confounding was her disparities—the juxtaposition in her of beautiful sun-flushed heights and deep dark holes. She had none of the things that the other things implied. She dangled in the air in a manner that made one dizzy; though one took comfort, at the worst, in feeling that one was there to catch her if she fell. Falling, at the same time, appeared scarce one of her properties, and it was positive for Lady Champer at moments that if one held out one's arms one might be, after all, much more likely to be pulled up. That was really a part of the excitement of the acquaintance.

"Well," said this friend and critic on one of the first of the London days, "say he does, on your return to your own country, go after you: how do you read, on that occurrence, the course of events?"

"Why, if he comes after me I'll have him."

"And do you think it so easy to 'have' him?"

Lily appeared, lovely and candid,—and it was an air and a way she often had,—to wonder what she thought. "I don't know that I think it any easier than he seems to think it to have *me*. I know moreover that, though he wants awfully to see the country, he wouldn't just now come to America unless to marry me; and if I take him at all," she pursued, "I want first to be able to show him to the girls."

"Why 'first'?" Lady Champer asked. "Wouldn't it do as well last?"

"Oh, I should want them to see me in Rome, too," said Lily. "But, dear me. I'm afraid I want a good many things! What I most want of course is that he should show me unmistakably what *he* wants. Unless he wants me more than anything else in the world, I don't want him. Besides, I hope he doesn't think I'm going to be married anywhere but in my own place."

"I see," said Lady Champer. "It's for your wedding you want the girls. And it's for the girls you want the Prince."

"Well, we're all bound by that promise. And of course *you'll* come!"

"Ah, my dear child——!" Lady Champer gasped.

"You can come with the old Princess. You'll be just the right company for her."

The elder friend considered afresh, with depth, the younger's beauty and serenity. "You *are*, love, beyond everything!"

The beauty and serenity took on for a moment a graver cast. "Why do you so often say that to me?"

"Because you so often make it the only thing to say. But you'll some day find out why," Lady Champer added with an intention of encouragement.

Lily Gunton, however, was a young person to whom encouragement looked queer; she had grown up without need of it, and it seemed indeed scarce required in her situation. "Do you mean you believe his mother won't come?"

"Over mountains and seas to see you married?—and to be seen also of the girls? If she does, *I* will. But we had perhaps better," Lady Champer wound up, "not count our chickens before they're hatched." To which, with one of the easy returns of gaiety that were irresistible in her, Lily made answer

that neither of the ladies in question struck her quite as chickens.

The Prince at all events presented himself in London with a promptitude that contributed to make the warning gratuitous. Nothing could have exceeded, by this time, Lady Champer's appreciation of her young friend, whose merits "town" at the beginning of June threw into renewed relief; but she had the imagination of greatness and, though she believed she tactfully kept it to herself, she thought what the young man had thus done a great deal for a Roman prince to do. Take him as he was, with the circumstances—and they were certainly peculiar, and he was charming—it was a far cry for him from Piazza Colonna to Clarges Street. If Lady Champer had the imagination of greatness, which the Prince in all sorts of ways gratified, Miss Gunton of Poughkeepsie—it was vain to pretend the contrary—was not great in any particular save one. She was great when she "drew." It was true that at the beginning of June she did draw with unprecedented energy and in a manner that, though Mrs. Brine's remarkable nerve apparently could stand it, fairly made a poor baronet's widow, little as it was her business, hold her breath. It was none of her business at all, yet she talked of it even with the Prince himself—to whom it was indeed a favourite subject and whose greatness, oddly enough, never appeared to shrink in the effect it produced upon him. The line they took together was that of wondering if the scale of Lily's drafts made really most for the presumption that the capital at her disposal was rapidly dwindling, or for that of its being practically infinite. "Many a fellow," the young man smiled, "would marry her to pull her up." He was, in any case, of the opinion that it was an occasion for deciding—one way or the other—quickly. Well, he did decide—so quickly that, within the week, Lily communicated to her friend that he had offered her his hand, his heart, his fortune, and all his titles, grandeurs, and appurtenances. She had given him his answer, and he was in bliss; though nothing, as yet, was settled but that.

Tall, fair, active, educated, amiable, simple, carrying so naturally his great name and pronouncing so kindly Lily's small one, the happy youth, if he was one of the most ancient of princes, was one of the most modern of Romans. This second character it was his special aim and pride to cultivate. He would have been pained at feeling himself an hour behind his age; and he had a way—both touching and amusing to some observers—of constantly comparing his watch with the dial of the day's news. It was in fact easy to see that in deciding to ally himself with a young alien of vague origin, whose striking beauty was reinforced only by her presumptive money, he had even put forward a little the fine hands of his timepiece. No one else, however,—not even Lady Champer, and least of all Lily herself,—had quite taken the measure, in this connection, of his merit. The quick decision he had spoken of was really a flying leap. He desired incontestably to rescue Miss Gunton's remainder; but to rescue it he had to take it for granted, and taking it for granted was nothing less than—at whatever angle considered—a risk. He never, naturally, used the word to her, but he distinctly faced a peril. The sense of what he had staked

on a vague return gave him, at the height of the London season, bad nights, or rather bad mornings—for he danced with his intended, as a usual thing, conspicuously, till dawn—besides obliging him to take, in the form of long explanatory, argumentative, and persuasive letters to his mother and sisters, his uncles, aunts, cousins, and preferred confidants, large measures of justification at home. The family sense was strong in his huge old house, just as the family array was numerous; he was dutifully conscious of the trust reposed in him, and moved from morning till night, he perfectly knew, as the observed of a phalanx of observers; whereby he the more admired himself for his passion, precipitation, and courage. He had only a probability to go upon, but he was—and by the romantic tradition of his race—so in love that he should surely not be taken in.

His private agitation of course deepened when, to do honour to her engagement and, as if she would have been ashamed to do less, Lily "drew" again most gloriously; but he managed to smile beautifully on her asking him if he didn't want her to be splendid, and at his worst hours he went no further than to wish that he might be married on the morrow. Unless it were the next day, or at most the next month, it really at moments seemed best that it should never be at all. On the most favourable view—with the solidity of the residuum fully assumed—there were still minor questions and dangers. A vast America, arching over his nuptials, bristling with expectant bridesmaids and underlaying their feet with expensive flowers, stared him in the face and prompted him to the reflection that if she dipped so deep into the mere remote overflow her dive into the fount itself would verily be a header. If she drew at such a rate in London how wouldn't she draw at Poughkeepsie? he asked himself, and practically asked Lady Champer; yet bore the strain of the question, without an answer, so nobly that when, with small delay, Poughkeepsie seemed simply to heave with reassurances, he regarded the ground as firm and his tact as rewarded. "And now at last, dearest," he said, "since everything's so satisfactory, you *will* write?" He put it appealingly,, endearingly, yet as if he could scarce doubt.

"Write, love? Why," she replied. "I've done nothing *but* write! I've written ninety letters."

"But not to mamma," he smiled.

"Mamma?"—she stared. "My dear boy, I've not at this time of day to remind you that I've the misfortune to have no mother. I lost mamma, you know, as you lost your father, in childhood. You may be sure," said Lily Gunton, "that I wouldn't otherwise have waited for you to prompt me."

There came into his face a kind of amiable convulsion. "Of course, darling, I remember—your beautiful mother (she *must* have been beautiful!) whom I should have been so glad to know. I was thinking of *my* mamma—who'll be so delighted to hear from you." The Prince spoke English in perfection—had lived in it from the cradle and appeared, particularly when alluding to his home and family, to matters familiar and of fact, or to those of dress and sport, of general recreation, to draw such a comfort from it as made the girl think of him as scarce more a foreigner than a

pleasant, auburn, slightly awkward, slightly slangy, and extremely well-tailored young Briton would have been. He sounded "mamma" like a rosy English schoolboy; yet just then, for the first time, the things with which he was connected struck her as in a manner strange and far-off. Everything in him, none the less—face and voice, and tact, above all his deep desire—laboured to bring them near and make them natural. This was intensely the case as he went on: "Such a little letter as you *might* send would really be awfully jolly."

"My dear child," Lily replied on quick reflection, "I'll write to her with joy the minute I hear from her. Won't she write to *me?*"

The Prince just visibly flushed. "In a moment if you'll only——"

"Write to her first?"

"Just pay her a little—no matter how little—your respects."

His attenuation of the degree showed perhaps a sense of a weakness of position; yet it was no perception of this that made the girl immediately say: "Oh, *caro*, I don't think I can begin. If you feel that *she* won't—as you evidently do—is it because you've asked her and she has refused?" The next moment, "I see you *have!*" she exclaimed. His rejoinder to this was to catch her in his arms, to press his cheek to hers, to murmur a flood of tender words in which contradiction, confession, supplication, and remonstrance were oddly confounded; but after he had sufficiently disengaged her to allow her to speak again, his effusion was checked by what came. "Do you really mean you can't induce her?" It renewed itself on the first return of ease; or it, more correctly perhaps, in order to renew itself, took this return—a trifle too soon—for granted. Singular, for the hour, was the quickness with which ease could leave them—so blissfully at one as they were; and, to be brief, it had not come back even when Lily spoke of the matter to Lady Champer. It is true that she waited but little to do so. She then went straight to the point. "What would you do if his mother doesn't write?"

"The old Princess—to *you?*" Her ladyship had not had time to mount guard in advance over the tone of this, which was doubtless (as she instantly, for that matter, herself became aware) a little too much that of "Have you really expected she would?" What Lily had expected found itself therefore not unassisted to come out—and came out indeed to such a tune that with all kindness, but with a melancholy deeper than any she had ever yet in the general connection used, Lady Champer was moved to remark that the situation might have been found more possible had a little more historic sense been brought to it. "You're the dearest thing in the world, and I can't imagine a girl's carrying herself in any way, in a difficult position, better than you do; only I'm bound to say I think you ought to remember that you're entering a very great house, of tremendous antiquity, fairly groaning under the weight of ancient honours, the heads of which—through the tradition of the great part they've played in the world—are accustomed to a great deal of deference. The old Princess, my dear, you see"—her ladyship gathered confidence a little as she went—"is a most prodigious personage."

"Why, Lady Champer, of course she

is, and that's just what I like her for!" said Lily Gunton.

"She has never in her whole life made an advance, any more than anyone has ever dreamed of expecting it of her. It's a pity that while you were there you didn't see her, for I think it would have helped you to understand. However, as you did see his sisters, the two Duchesses and dear little Donna Claudia, you know how charming they all *can* be. They only want to be nice, I know, and I dare say that on the smallest opportunity you'll hear from the Duchesses."

The plural had a sound of splendour, but Lily quite kept her head. "What do you call an opportunity? Am I not giving them, by accepting their son and brother, the best—and in fact the only—opportunity they could desire?"

"I like the way, darling," Lady Champer smiled, "you talk about 'accepting'!"

Lily thought of this—she thought of everything. "Well, say it would have been a better one still for them if I had refused him."

Her friend caught her up. "But you haven't."

"Then they must make the most of the occasion as it is." Lily was very sweet, but very lucid. "The Duchesses may write or not, as they like; but I'm afraid the Princess simply *must*." She hesitated, but after a moment went on: "He oughtn't to be willing moreover that I shouldn't expect to be welcomed."

"He isn't!" Lady Champer blurted out.

Lily jumped at it. "Then he has told you? It's her attitude?"

She had spoken without passion, but her friend was scarce the less frightened. "My poor child, what can he do?"

Lily saw perfectly. "He can make her."

Lady Champer turned it over, but her fears were what was clearest. "And if he doesn't?"

"If he 'doesn't'?" The girl ambiguously echoed it.

"I mean if he can't."

Well, Lily, more cheerfully, declined, for the hour, to consider this. He would certainly do for her what was right; so that after all, though she had herself put the question, she disclaimed the idea that an answer was urgent. There was time, she conveyed—which Lady Champer only desired to believe; a faith moreover somewhat shaken in the latter when the Prince entered her room the next day with the information that there was none—none at least to leave everything in the air. Lady Champer had not yet made up her mind as to which of these young persons she liked most to draw into confidence, nor as to whether she most inclined to take the Roman side with the American or the American side with the Roman. But now in truth she was settled; she gave proof of it in the increased lucidity with which she spoke for Lily.

"Wouldn't the Princess depart—a—from her usual attitude for such a great occasion?"

The difficulty was a little that the young man so well understood his mother. "The devil of it is, you see, that it's for Lily herself, so much more, she thinks the occasion great."

Lady Champer mused. "If you hadn't her consent I could understand it. But from the moment she thinks

the girl good enough for you to marry——"

"Ah, she doesn't!" the Prince gloomily interposed. "However," he explained, "she accepts her because there are reasons—my own feeling, now so my very life, don't you see? But it isn't quite open arms. All the same, as I tell Lily, the arms *would* open."

"If she'd make the first step? Hum!" said Lady Champer, not without the note of grimness. "She'll be obstinate."

The young man, with a melancholy eye, quite coincided. "She'll be obstinate."

"So that I strongly recommend you to manage it," his friend went on after a pause. "It strikes me that if the Princess can't do it for Lily she might at least do it for you. Any girl you marry becomes thereby somebody."

"Of course—doesn't she? She certainly ought to do it for *me*. I'm after all the head of the house."

"Well, then, make her!" said Lady Champer a little impatiently.

"I will. Mamma adores me, and I adore *her*."

"And you adore Lily, and Lily adores you—therefore everybody adores everybody, especially as I adore you both. With so much adoration all round, therefore, things ought to march."

"They shall!" the young man declared with spirit. I adore you, too—you don't mention that; for you help me immensely. But what do you suppose she'll do if she doesn't?"

The agitation already visible in him ministered a little to vagueness; but his friend after an instant disembroiled it. "What do I suppose Lily will do if your mother remains stiff?" Lady Champer faltered, but she let him have it. "She'll break."

His wondering eyes became strange, "Just for that?"

"You may certainly say it isn't much—when people love as you do."

"Ah, I'm afraid then Lily doesn't!"—and he turned away in his trouble.

She watched him while he moved, not speaking for a minute. "My dear young man, are you afraid of your mamma?"

He faced short about again. I'm afraid of this—that if she does do it she won't forgive her. She *will* do it—yes. But Lily will be for her, in consequence, ever after, the person who had made her submit herself. She'll hate her for that—and then she'll hate me for being concerned in it." The Prince presented it all with clearness—almost with charm. "What do you say to that?"

His friend had to think. "Well, only, I fear, that we belong, Lily and I, to a race unaccustomed to counting with such passions. Let her hate!" she, however, a trifle inconsistently wound up.

"But I love her so!"

"Which?" Lady Champer asked it almost ungraciously; in such a tone at any rate that, seated on the sofa with his elbows on his knees, his much-ringed hands nervously locked together and his eyes of distress wide open, he met her with visible surprise. What she met *him* with is perhaps best noted by the fact that after a minute of it his hands covered his bent face and she became aware she had drawn tears. This produced such regret in her that before they parted she did what she could to attenuate and explain—making a great point, at all events, of her rule, with Lily, of putting only his own side of the

case. "I insist awfully, you know, on your greatness!"

He jumped up, wincing. "Oh, that's horrid."

"I don't know. Whose fault is it, then, at any rate, if trying to help you may have that side?" This was a question that, with the tangle he had already to unwind, only added a twist; yet she went on as if positively to add another. "Why on earth don't you, all of you, leave them alone?"

"Leave them——?"

"All your Americans."

"Don't you like them then—the women?"

She hesitated. "No. Yes. They're an interest. But they're a nuisance. It's a question, very certainly, if they're worth the trouble they give."

This at least it seemed he could take in. "You mean that one should be quite sure first what they *are* worth?"

He made her laugh now. "It would appear that you never *can* be. But also really that you can't keep your hands off."

He fixed the social scene an instant with his heavy eye. "Yes. Doesn't it?"

"However," she pursued as if he again a little irritated her, "Lily's position is quite simple."

"Quite. She just loves me."

"I mean simple for herself. She really makes no differences. It's only we—you and I—who make them all."

The Prince wondered. "But she tells me she delights in us; has, that is, such a sense of what we are supposed to 'represent.'"

"Oh, she *thinks* she has. Americans think they have all sorts of things; but they haven't. That's just *it*"—Lady Champer was philosophic. "Nothing but their Americanism. If you marry anything, you marry that; and if your mother accepts anything that's what she accepts." Then, though the young man followed the demonstration with an apprehension almost pathetic, she gave him without mercy the whole of it. "Lily's rigidly logical. A girl—as *she* knows girls—is 'welcomed,' on her engagement, before anything else can happen, by the family of her young man; and the motherless girl, alone in the world, more punctually than any other. His mother—if she's a 'lady'—takes it upon herself. Then the girl goes and stays with them. But she does nothing before. *Tirez-vous de là.*"

The young man sought on the spot to obey this last injunction, and his effort presently produced a flash. "Oh, if she'll come and *stay* with us"—all would, easily, be well! The flash went out, however, when Lady Champer returned: "Then let the Princess invite her."

Lily a fortnight later simply said to her from one hour to the other, "I'm going home," and took her breath away by sailing on the morrow with the Bransbys. The tense cord had somehow snapped; the proof was in the fact that the Prince, dashing off to his good friend at this crisis an obscure, an ambiguous note, started the same night for Rome. Lady Champer, for the time, sat in darkness, but during the summer many things occurred; and one day in the autumn, quite unheralded and with the signs of some of them in his face, the Prince appeared again before her. He was not long in telling her his story, which was simply that he had come to her, all the way from Rome, for news of Lily and to talk of Lily. She was prepared, as it happened, to meet his

impatience; yet her preparation was but little older than his arrival and was deficient moreover in an important particular. She was not prepared to knock him down, and she made him talk to gain time. She had, however, to understand, put a primary question: "She never wrote, then?"

"Mamma? Oh yes—when she at last got frightened at Miss Gunton's having become so silent. She wrote in August; but Lily's own decisive letter—letter to me, I mean—crossed with it. It was too late—that put an end."

"A *real* end?"

Everything in the young man showed how real. "On the ground of her being willing no longer to keep up, by the stand she had taken, such a relation between mamma and *me*. But her rupture," he wailed, "keeps it up more than anything else."

"And is it very bad?"

"Awful, I assure you. I've become for my mother a person who has made her make, all for nothing, an unprecedented advance, a humble submission; and she's so disgusted, all round, that it's no longer the same old charming thing for us to be together. It makes it worse for her that I'm still madly in love."

"Well," said Lady Champer after a moment, "if you're still madly in love I can only be sorry for you."

"You can *do* nothing for me?—don't advise me to go over?"

She had to take a longer pause. "You don't at all know then what has happened?—that old Mr. Gunton has died and left her everything?"

All his vacancy and curiosity came out in a wild echo.

"Everything?"

"She writes me that it's a great deal of money."

"You've just heard from her, then?"

"This morning. I seem to make out," said Lady Champer, "an extraordinary number of dollars."

"Oh, I was sure it was!" the young man moaned.

"And she's engaged," his friend went on, "to Mr. Bransby."

He bounded, rising before her. "Mr. Bransby?"

"'Adam P.'—the gentleman with whose mother and sisters she went home. *They*, she writes, have beautifully welcomed her."

"*Dio mio!*" The Prince stared; he had flushed with the blow, and the tears had come into his eyes. "And I believed she loved me!"

"*I* didn't!" said Lady Champer with some curtness.

He gazed about; he almost rocked; and, unconscious of her words, he appealed, inarticulate and stricken. At last, however, he found his voice. "What on earth then shall I do? I can less than ever go back to mamma!"

She got up for him, she thought for him, pushing a better chair into her circle. "Stay here with me, and I'll ring for tea. Sit there nearer the fire—you're cold."

"Awfully!" he confessed as he sank. "And I believed she loved me!" he repeated as he stared at the fire.

"*I* didn't!" Lady Champer once more declared. This time, visibly, he heard her, and she immediately met his wonder. "No—it was all the rest; your great historic position, the glamour of your name, and your past. Otherwise

what she stood out for wouldn't be excusable. But she has the sense of such things, and *they* were what she loved." So, by the fire, his hostess explained it, while he wondered the more.

"I thought that last summer you told me just the contrary."

It seemed, to do her justice, to strike her. "Did I? Oh, well, how does one know? With Americans one is lost!"

Glacier-Bridegroom

In the summer of 1882, the little Carinthian village of Heiligenblut was haunted by two persons. One was a young German scientist, with long hair and spectacles: the other was a tall English lady slightly bent, with a face wherein the finger of time had deeply written tender things. Her hair was white as silver, and she wore a long black veil. Their habits were strangely similar. Every morning, when the eastern light shone deepest into the ice-cavern at the base of the great Pasterzen glacier, these two would walk thither; then both would sit for an hour or two and peer into its depths. Neither knew why the other was there. The woman would go back for an hour in the late afternoon; the man, never. He knew that the morning light was necessary for his search.

The man was the famous young Zimmerman, son of his father, the old doctor, long since dead. But the Herr Doctor had written a famous tract, when late in life, refuting all Splüthners, past, present, and to come; and had charged his son, as a most sacred trust, that he should repair to the base of the Pasterzen glazier in the year 1882, where he would find a leaden bullet, graven with his father's name, and the date A. U. C. 2590. All this would be a vindication of his father's science. Splüthner, too, was a very old man, and Zimmerman the younger (for even he was no longer young) was fearful lest Splüthner should not live to witness his own refutation. The woman and the man never spoke to each other.

Alas, no one could have known Mrs. Knollys in the young days of the century; not even the innkeeper, had he been there. But he, too, was long since dead. Mrs. Knollys was now bent and white-haired; she had forgotten, herself, how she looked in those old days. Her life had been lived. She was now like a woman of another world; it seemed another world in which her fair hair had twined about her husband's fingers, and she and Charles stood upon the evening mountain, and looked in one another's eyes. That was the world of her wedding days, but it seemed more like a world she had left when born on earth. And now he was coming back to her in this. Meantime the great Pasterzen glacier had moved on, marking only the centuries; the men upon its borders had seen no change; the same great waves lifted their snowy heads upon its surface; the same crevasse was still where he had fallen. At night, the moonbeams, falling, still shivered off its glassy face; its pale presence filled the night, and immortality lay brooding in its hollows.

Friends were with Mrs. Knollys, but she left them at the inn. One old guide remembered her, and asked to bear her company. He went with her in the morning, and sat a few yards from her, waiting. In the afternoon she went alone. He would not have credited you, had you told him that the glacier moved. He thought it but an Englishwoman's fancy, but he waited with her. Himself had never forgotten that old day. And Mrs. Knollys sat there silently, searching the clear depths of the ice, that she might find her husband.

One night she saw a ghost. The latest beam of the sun, falling on a mountain opposite, had shone back into the ice-cavern; and seemingly deep within, in the grave azure light, she fancied she saw a face turned toward her. She even thought she saw Charles's yellow hair, and the self-same smile his lips had worn when he bent down to her before he fell. It could be but a fancy. She went home, and was silent with her friends about what had happened. In the moonlight she went back, and again the next morning before dawn. She told no one of her going; but the old guide met her at the door, and walked silently behind her. She had slept, the glacier ever present in her dreams.

The sun had not yet risen when she came; and she sat a long time in the cavern, listening to the murmur of the river, flowing under the glacier at her feet. Slowly the dawn began, and again she seemed to see the shimmer of a face —such a face as one sees in the coals of a dying fire. Then the full sun came over the eastern mountain, and the guide heard a woman's cry. There before her was Charles Knollys! The face seemed hardly pale; and there was the same faint smile—a smile like her memory of it, five and forty years gone by. Safe in the clear ice, still unharmed, there lay—O God! not her Charles; not the Charles of her own thought, who had lived through life with her and shared her sixty years; not the old man she had borne thither in her mind—but a boy, a boy of one and twenty, lying asleep, a ghost from another world coming to confront her from the distant past, immortal in the immortality of the glacier. There was his quaint coat, of the fashion of half a century ago; his blue eyes open; his young, clear brow; all the form of the past she had forgotten; and she, his bride, stood there to welcome him, with her wrinkles, her bent figure, and thin white hairs. She was living, he was dead; and she was two and forty years older than he.

Then at last the long-kept tears came to her and she bent her white head in the snow. The old man came up with his pick, silently, and began working in the ice. The woman lay weeping, and the boy, with his still, faint smile, lay looking at them, from the clear ice-veil, from his open eyes.

I believe that the professor found his bullet; I know not. I believe that the scientific world rang with his name and the thesis that he published on the glacier's motion, and the changeless temperature his father's lost thermometer had shown. All this you may read. I know no more.

But I know that in the English church-yard there are now two graves, and a single stone, to Charles Knollys and Mary his wife; and the boy of one and twenty sleeps there with his bride of sixty-three; his young frame with

her old one, his yellow hair beside her white. And I do not know that there is not some place, not here, where they are still together, and he is one and twenty and she is eighteen. I do not know this; but I know that all the pamphlets of the German doctor cannot tell me it is false.

Meantime the great Pasterzen glacier moves on, and the rocks with it; and the mountain flings his shadow of the planets in its face.

The Storm

It was on the morning of a day in the end of November, that, having taken my gun on my shoulder, put my spy-glass in my pocket, and whistled out my dogs, I left my own house, situated on the very verge of a bank overhanging the ocean, and began a walk in quest of game along one of the most rugged coasts on the mainland of Scotland. There is something humiliating to a sportsman in returning home without success, and as I was not fortunate on my first outset, I continued going on mile after mile, till, having filled my game-bag, I began to reflect that it must be dark long ere I could again reach my own fireside. My worthy old house-keeper, too, would probably experience more alarm on so unwonted an occurrence, than even the delight of unpacking my well-filled bag could repay her for, though this was in general with her an occupation of most absorbing interest. And, indeed, I saw cause to wish, on my own account, that I had not extended my ramble so far; for, as I began to retrace my steps, I perceived all those portentous sights and sounds which, from my long residence near the sea, I knew full well were the sure indications of a coming storm. The sun was slanting his sickly setting beams from amidst murky clouds on the dark and sullen waters. when I espied a vessel like a dim speck in the distant horizon.

On looking at her through my glass, I saw that she was a large merchant-brig, apparently heavy laden, and labouring on her course, as I hoped, towards a convenient little harbour at the distance of two or three miles further along the coast than the site of my residence. The clouds now began to "blot the sun," and were fast gathering into a lowering gloom. The innumerable sea-birds rose from their roosting-places on the rocks with harsh and boding screams, and winged their flight landward. The tide was moving onward, and the waves came in with a heavy swell, as if the weight of waters at their back meant to force them far beyond the usual tide-mark, and a sort of drowsy sound arose from them in hollow cadence. The sea became more dusky and indistinct, and I looked in vain for the vessel. The wind suddenly swept along the ocean, and doleful and melancholy sounds were echoed back from the rocks and caverns, while the storm seemed to be mustering up its powers of destruction. All was black and terrific, and presently there came on the thickest and most suffocating shower of small sleet I remembered to have ever witnessed. My back was, however, to this whirlwind blast, and it drove me on with much

more speed than I could otherwise have attained.

When the shower had passed on, I again looked towards the point where I had seen the ship, but it was too dark now to perceive her. Somehow, this vessel seemed to have taken a strong hold of my imagination. I had witnessed many storms during a long residence on the coast, and seen crafts of all dimensions struggling through them, but it appeared to me that I had never felt the same interest in any of them. And when the tempest still waxed more and more wrathful, and the surges began to rush upon the shore with headlong rage, and seemed in their thundering incursions to make the firm earth to tremble, and I looked upon the boiling deep, and heard the fierce winds contending with it in its bleak domain, a presentiment seemed to seize upon me that she would never more reach a haven. The idea haunted me; and all the way home I thought on the merciless and exterminating warfare which the relentless elements were waging with this doomed ship and her hopeless mariners.

When I had nearly reached my own house, I turned and stood awhile on the top of the bank, and saw wave succeeding wave, rolling impetuously to the shore, each rising higher than the last, till their ranks were broken and lost in the foamy surf, which even then, though the tide wanted more than two hours of being at its height, threw its white froth upon the greensward of the bank, that sloped down to a little bay.

The gloom was now gathering into utter darkness. Another shower of mingled hail and sleet was coming fast on the wings of the tempest, and I hurried into the house. My dogs, glad to escape from such a night, had got there before me, and in a great measure tranquillised the mind of my old domestic, who having, as usual, with indefatigable care, aired for me a change of garments, and placed my slippers and a bottle of Fowler's best ale at the fire, was anxiously awaiting my arrival. But neither the old woman's joy at my appearing in safety, after fearing that I might have been driven by the storm over a rock or a precipice, nor her exclamations of exultation as she peered into the game-bag, and bore it off in triumph to parade its contents before the eyes of the man-servant and the scullion, or the sight of a good dinner and a good fire, though cold and hungry, drove from my mind the thoughts of the labouring vessel. I was tired with my long walk, and the rough buffetings I had received from the uncivil elements, and I tried to take half an hour's nap; but there was no sleep in my eyes. I tried to read a new and interesting book, but I could not fix my attention. I tried to think on a thousand momentous subjects, but there was only one that would keep the lead in spite of me, and that was the ship. I rose, and, going into a dark room that looked towards the sea, I threw up the sash of the window. All was impenetrable darkness, except the line of white foam at the bottom of the bank, and this was dimly seen.

But if the eye could discern nothing, it was not so with the ear; for the howling of the winds, the deafening bursts of the sea upon the land, and now and then a distant peal of thunder, told that the storm was still more hideous and more fiercely raging than before. It

was now high tide, and I trusted, when it began to turn, there might be some abatement in the severity of the storm. With this hope, I was about to shut down the window, when I fancied that I heard, mingling with the hoarser tones of the blast, shrill and discordant cries, such as the sea-birds had uttered when they forsook the rocks. I listened long, and, even after having shut the window, returned, and opened it again and again; but no such sound was repeated. Still, I could not help fancying that these cries might have come from human beings, and I became so restless and uneasy, that I was determined to go down the bank, and try to ascertain the fact. Where was that vessel of which I thought so much? Might she not now be near, even almost at my door, though the darkness prevented my seeing her? And might not the cries, which I still persuaded myself were not imaginary, have been those of her wretched mariners? I could no longer bear the suspense which these questions gave rise to, and, buttoning on a rough greatcoat, and putting on a pair of thick shoes and gaiters, I directed my man-servant to accoutre himself in a similar manner.

When this was accomplished, I made him take with him the stable-lantern. Thus provided for the storm, we descended the bank. I had been right in supposing that the receding tide would bring some abatement of the tempest; for so it proved. The wind was not so high as it had been; the clouds were moving faster; and the moon, newly risen, was making an ineffectual attempt to show herself for more than a minute at a time. The sea was swelling proudly, as if indignant at being foiled in her attempt to overmaster the land; and, though slowly retreating, like a brave but vanquished foe, was dealing her parting strokes with unabated fury.

The little bay of which I have spoken was in some measure divided into two, by a large rock which rose on the edge of the common sea-mark, and by a small burn which ran into the sea at its side. This little brook, which in its calmer moods wound itself quietly round many a grassy knoll and rocky fragment, and used to look in the moonlight like a stream of molten silver, now foamed and fretted, and urged on its turbid and angry waters to the ocean, forming a barrier between one side of the bay and the other. It was to this place, however, that I directed my steps; for if there had been scath, I felt assured it was on the other side of the burn, for there the rocks were most dangerous, and it was from that quarter I had heard the cries, which still seemed to ring in my ears. The water of the swollen rivulet ran deep in its channel; and as the lantern was held up, and I saw that it would take me above the middle, I paused for an instant on the brink. But during this pause I looked on the other side; and though the moon was hid, and all was dim obscurity, I yet thought that I discerned an unusual appearance on the part of the beach and the foot of the bank which the sea had left. My servant thought the same. George was a stout fellow, who did not mind a good drenching; and holding up the lantern above the water, he immediately dashed through to the other side, and in an instant shouted out: "A wreck! a wreck!" My fears were now confirmed, and I passed the burn, and followed him to where the gravel and the grass were covered like a bleach-

ground with garments of all descriptions.

The moon now peeped forth again from among the heavy clouds, and as they drove onward, her light shone more steadily; but there was no vessel to be seen. We climbed a rock which again divided the bay from the other part of the coast, and there lay beneath us, high on the top of a ridge of pointed rocks, and keel upwards, the huge dark hull of the fated vessel. We descended as quickly as possible, and, while searching about for her hapless crew, shouted loudly at intervals, that if any still remained alive, they might know that help was nigh. It was, however, in vain; no answer was returned. We remained a long time, still repeating our shouts without success; and as the sea had not retired far enough for us to approach the ship, we at length began to ascend the grassy bank, and had proceeded but a few steps, when we saw a man stretched at the foot of it. The upper part of his body was naked, and we perceived the blood oozing from a wound in his left side.

We attempted to lift him up, for he was not dead; but finding him quite insensible, we again placed him on the grass, and by rubbing his limbs, and putting the dry parts of our greatcoats round his shoulders, endeavoured by warmth to restore the circulation. In this we succeeded after some length of time. But his speech was so incoherent, that we could learn little or nothing about the wreck. He, however, constantly affirmed that he was the only one left alive—that all, all had perished; and raved wildly about Jessy and her screams; and when we attempted to move him further up the bank till George went home to procure more assistance, that he might be conveyed from the beach, he expressed his determination to remain where he was, that he might die with Jessy; but whether this person, who, it appeared, had found a watery grave, was his wife, his sister, or his sweetheart, it was impossible to guess. He was, however, in spite of his desire to remain where he was, in no condition to resist; and when George and some men whom he brought with him arrived, he was placed on a horse before one of them, and held on, while another slowly led the animal to the house. Here he was put under the care of my old housekeeper, who dressed his wound, wrapped him in warm blankets, and having cautiously administered some stimulating liquid, kept him quiet, till exhausted nature found a short relief in sleep.

Meanwhile, the tide had so far receded that I and my servant ventured to approach the vessel, though ever and anon she was struck by a wave stronger than its fellows, which sent its spray high in the air, to descend in a heavy shower of brine. In spite of this, however, we entered by a yawning rent in her side, and found that she was indeed an utter wreck—her bottom having been stove in, and her cargo, and nearly everything else, out of her, except some planks and cordage, in which three of the bodies of her unfortunate crew were entangled. We groped about, aided by the feeble light of the lantern, in the faint hope of finding some one still alive. But I shall never forget the indescribable awe which I felt during this search, or the thrilling horror which assailed me when my touch came in contact with a corpse. The search was

vain, in so far as that we found no living thing within her; and it being impossible to do more till we were aided by the light of day, I returned home, and went to bed for a few hours.

The morning came, and presented a most complete and appalling picture of maritime desolation. The tide had again been at the full, and left behind it, for a considerable distance along the shore, clothes, bedding, barrels, chests, masts, cordage, and dead bodies. The latter were put into carts, recently covered by a white sheet, and removed to the village church, at the distance of a mile, there to be dressed and coffined, and to remain till their interment. In the meantime, my good old dame had, by dint of reiterated questions, aided by her own tact and his wild ravings, learned much of the story of her unhappy patient, and somewhat about the vessel, which it appeared had been loaded with slates at a port far on the east coast of Scotland, and was bound for Newcastle-on-Tyne. The poor young man was a sailor, a native of the little town from whence the vessel had just come, and had been several voyages to sea. He had saved a little money, and had returned to his native place, to ask the consent of Jessy's parents to her becoming his wife, which was refused. But her sailor William had long since won his way to her heart. She loved him passionately, and she could not see him depart again without her. They were to be married as soon as they reached Newcastle; and all would be forgiven when she wrote and told them how happy she was.

Seven corpses were flung upon the beach during the first day, but that of the unfortunate young woman was not among them. On the morning following, however, as I was directing the people I had employed to secure whatever was of any value for the benefit of the owners, a cry was raised that her body had come on shore. My housekeeper had provided for all contingencies; so that, as soon as the corpse came in upon the waves, two women, who had been sent by her to watch for it, were ready to receive and dress it in a long white cotton garment: this done, they carried her to the foot of the bank, and stretched her out on the greensward. A sort of painful curiosity, mingled with a deeper feeling, carried me to look upon the remains of the poor girl.

She appeared not more than eighteen, of middle size, and delicate in her form. Her eyes were gently closed, and she looked lovely in death, for the bloom of life and health had not forsaken her cheek, and her lips were still of a coral red, thus preserved by the suddenness of her decease, and the icy bath in which she had been immersed for so many hours. There was a sweet and placid expression on the features, which had probably regained that which was natural to them when the traces of terror had passed away. Her long fair hair had got entangled with the seaweed, which it was found impossible to separate from it; but this had become an ornament, for the way in which the women had twisted the hair round the head, brought the weeds of different colours into the form of a garland, that well became the marble brow, and was touchingly in keeping with the sad story of her fate. As I stood moralising on the brief history of this confiding innocent young creature, whom love and her

lover had wiled away from her duty, I looked up and beheld the wretched William approaching the spot, with all the haste his stiffened wound and bruises allowed him to make. He had expressed so many earnest wishes for the recovery of the body, that my housekeeper informed him instantly when it was found, but was unable to keep him in the house another moment.

As soon as he reached the body, and had gazed upon it for a few moments, he threw himself on his knees by her side, and impetuously kissed her lips and cheeks, while his heart seemed as if it would burst through his throbbing breast. I could not, I confess, any longer stand to witness this heart-breaking scene. Indeed, I felt it was a grief too sacred to be disturbed by the presence of any human being, and I moved to a distance and kept watch, that I might prevent the intrusion of any other person until the arrival of a coffin, for which I had sent immediately on the body being found. By the time it arrived, the first frantic paroxysm of grief had subsided, and he stood silently by while the women lifted her into it. I felt the deepest pity for this poor young man, and directed the body to be taken up to my house, there to lie till its interment.

This, however, to my surprise, he opposed; and briefly, but strongly, entreated that it might be carried straight to the church, and that the lid of the coffin might not be screwed down. I have said I was surprised at his rejecting the offer I had made, from the idea that he would wish to watch it till it was hid from his sight in the grave. I, however, soon understood the motive which had actuated him; for no entreaties could move him from following her he loved to the church, and remaining there for two nights, where he felt at full liberty to give vent to the grief which he could not always restrain. It was thought proper that the interment of all the bodies should take place on the second day from that on which the young woman was found; and the male sufferers were accordingly buried in a retired part of the church-yard, set apart as the place of sepulture for the friendless drowned. William, however, had entreated that his Jessy should not be buried there, and, through my interest, her grave was dug in a picturesque corner of the church-yard, beneath a weeping birch, which hung its boughs tenderly over the spot.

The lover supported the head of the coffin, as the representative of those who should have been there, for there was no parent, brother or sister, kindred or friend, save himself, to mourn the fate of her who had departed in her bloom, cut down as a flower of the field; but the grief of all seemed centered in him who had taken this office upon himself. He did not speak, nor did he shed a tear, or utter a groan; but when I looked upon his face as the coffin was lowered into the earth, and saw his despairing eye, his compressed lips, and contracted brow, I felt that his was a sorrow which would not soon pass away. As soon as the earth was heaped upon the coffin, and the green sod adjusted, all left the church-yard save the broken-hearted William, who lingered on the spot, from which I did not attempt to withdraw him, till more than an hour afterwards, when, returning to the church-yard, I found him lying on the grave in a state of seeming torpor, from

which I gently roused him, and prevailed on him to accompany me home.

While on our way, I endeavored to suggest such grounds of comfort as presented themselves to me—such as the softening and obliterating effects of time—his own youth (for he was only two-and-twenty)—and the happiness which might be yet in reserve for him. To all this he answered not a word, but shook his head; and when I looked on his already wasted form, and thought of the severe stroke he had received on his side when dashed on the rocks, and of his fastings and watchings, and, above all, of his devouring grief, I feared the foundation of some dangerous illness was laid. Having this impression on my mind, I would fain have had him remain quietly at my house for some time before he attempted to return home, but no persuasions were of any avail. "Only let me reach the house of *her* parents," he said, "and let me hear them say they forgive *her,* and that is all now in this world that I care for."

He accordingly departed almost immediately. Nearly eight months afterwards, he returned, worn to a shadow; while the bright colour that flushed his cheek, and the unnatural brilliance of his dark eyes, full of an unearthly expression, shewed that consumption had been stealing upon him, and marked him for its prey. During his absence, no new scene, no employment, no pleasure, had for a moment the power to draw his thoughts from the grave of his Jessy; and he had now returned to fulfil his only wish—to be laid by her side. "She forsook all for me," he said, "and it is but meet that I should leave all and return to her." His end now rapidly approached, and a pious old woman with whom he lodged brought her minister to see him. This worthy man was a dissenting clergyman, who was ever the friend of the poor and the sorrowful. He had studied medicine as well as divinity, and acquired considerable skill during his village practice, and administered both to the mind and body of poor William. For the body he could do little, but he assisted to effect in his mind a pious resignation to his fate. Nor did he wait long before his last hour arrived, in which his spirit went to the merciful Being in whom he trusted, while his mortal remains were laid beside his Jessy.

The melancholy story of these two unfortunate lovers made for some time a deep impression on my mind, and I erected a neat tomb of white stone to their memory, on which is briefly recorded their simple and affecting story.

Madame Balmont's Defense

It was in the year 1638 that I had the honor to become acquainted with that Amazon of our times, Madame de Saint Balmont, whose life was a prodigy of courage and virtue, uniting in her person all the valor of a determined soldier, and all the modesty of a truly Christian woman. She was of a very good family of Lorraine, and was born with a disposition worthy of her birth. The beauty of her face corresponded to that of her mind, but her shape by no

means agreed with these, being small and rather clumsy. Providence, who had destined her for a life more laborious than that which females in general lead, had formed her more robust and more able to bear bodily fatigue. It had inspired her with so great a contempt for beauty, that when she had the small-pox she was as pleased to be marked with it as other women are afflicted on a similar occasion, and said that it would enable her to be more like a man. She was married to the Count de Saint Balmont, who was not inferior to her either in birth or in merit. They lived together very happily till the troubles that arose in Lorraine obliged them to separate. The count was constantly employed by the duke his sovereign, in a manner suitable to his rank and disposition, except when he once gave him the command of a poor feeble fortress, in which he had the assurance to resist the arms of Louis XIV. for several days together, at the risk of being treated with the extremest severity of military law, which pronounces the most infamous and degrading punishment against all those officers who hold out without any prospect of success. M. de Saint Balmont went indeed farther, and added insolence to rashness; for, at every shot of cannon that was fired at the fortress, he appeared at the windows, attended by some fiddlers, who played by his side. This madness (for one cannot call it by a more gentle name) had nearly cost him very dear; for when he was taken, it was agitated in the council of war, composed of the officers whom he had treated with this insolence, whether he should not be hung up immediately; but regard was paid to his birth, and perhaps to his courage, however indiscreet. Madame de Saint Balmont remained upon his estates to take care of them. Hitherto she had only exerted her soldier-like disposition in hunting and shooting (which is a kind of war), but very soon an opportunity presented itself of realizing it, and it was this:—An officer in our cavalry had taken up his quarters upon one of her husband's estates, and was living there at discretion. Madame de Saint Balmont sent him a very civil letter of complaint on his ill-behavior, which he treated with great contempt. Piqued at this, she was resolved that he should give her satisfaction, and merely consulting her resentment, she wrote to him a note, signed Le Chevalier de Saint Balmont. In this note she observed to him, that the ungentlemanlike manner in which he had behaved to his sister-in-law obliged him to resent it, and demanded that he would give him with his sword that satisfaction which his letter had refused. The officer accepted the challenge, and repaired to the place appointed. Madame de Saint Balmont met him, dressed in man's clothes. They immediately drew their swords, and our heroine had the advantage of him; when, after having disarmed him, she said with a very gracious smile, "You thought, sir, I make no doubt, that you were fighting with Le Chevalier de Saint Balmont; it is, however, Madame de Saint Balmont of that name who returns you your sword, and begs you in future to pay more regard to the requests of the ladies." She then left him, covered with shame and confusion; and as the story goes, he immediately absented himself, and no one ever saw him afterwards. But be that as it may,

this incident serving merely to inflame the courage of the fair challenger, she did not rest satisfied with merely preserving her estates by repelling force by force, but she afforded protection to many of the gentlemen in her neighborhood, who made no scruple to take refuge in the village, and put themselves under her orders when she took the field, which she always did with success, her designs being executed with a prudence equal to her courage. I have often been in company with this extraordinary personage, at the house of Madame de Fequieres, wife to the celebrated marshal of that name at Verdun; and it was quite ridiculous to see how embarrassed she appeared in her female dress, and (after she had quitted it in the town) with what ease and spirit she got on horseback, and attended the ladies that were of her party, and whom she had left in her carriage, in their little excursions into the country.

The manner of living, however, of Madame de Saint Balmont, so far removed from that of her sex, and which in all other females who have attempted it has ever been found united with libertinism of manners, was in her accompanied with nothing that bore the least resemblance to it. When she was at home in time of peace, her whole day was employed in the offices of religion; in prayers, in reading the Bible and books of devotion, in visiting the poor of her parish, whom she was ever assisting with the most active zeal and charity. This manner of living procured her the admiration and esteem of persons of all description in her neighborhood, and insured her a degree of respect that could not have been greater towards a queen.